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INFOLDINGS AND UNFOLDINGS

OF THE DIVINE GENIUS

IN

NATURE AND MAN.

BY

JOHN PULSFORD.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

HAMILTON, ADAMS & CO.

1887.



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ROOTS AND BRANCHES.

"Blessed is the man whose delight is in the Law of the Lord: . . . He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water."

PSA. i. 1-3.

"The fowls of Heaven sing among the branches":—

PSA. civ. 12.

". . . where the birds make their nests."

ver. 17.

"Trees of Frankincense."

SOL. SONG iv. 14.

"Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified."

ISA. lxi. 3.

IF there be a law of nature which is universal it is surely gravitation. Stones never rise into the air, unless a force superior to gravitation lifts them; and if thrown into the air by force, they alight again as soon as the force is spent which threw them up.

But look at the Trees, how they persist, in spite of the Law of gravitation, in lifting themselves out of the earth, holding themselves perpendicularly, and throwing out branches skyward, in great freedom!

To the stones who do not know the secret, it is a perfect miracle, that the trees lift themselves towards heaven, and make such a flourish of their liberty. Bury a pebble, and it will obey the Law of gravita-

tion for ever. Bury an acorn, and it will obey a higher law ; and that Law is in itself. Is the Law of gravitation suspended ? Never for one moment. But in the buried acorn, and the buried wheat corn, there is a *Vital Force* which is superior to the attraction of the earth.

II. Here is the explanation of all miracles, so-called. They are not suspensions of Law, nor are they contrary to Law ; but instances of the coming in of a higher Law. Introduce anywhere a more potent factor, and you have new and wonderful results. One man sees an apple fall from the tree and lie motionless on the earth ; and he cries out,—the Law of gravitation ! Another man sees the apple secretly evolving from the tree, hanging on to the branch, living, growing, ripening there ; and he cries out,—Here is a higher Law, here the sweet, all-knowing, all-powerful Gentleness is at work ; and for very joy of that Force, he worships.

When we call certain works *supernatural*, let no one suppose that they cease to be natural, because we prefix the particle super. *Supernatural*, means *eminently* natural, *transcendently* natural. There is the natural of the lowest plane ; there is the natural of a higher plane ; and the natural of the highest plane. Physical nature constitutes one plane, or region ; psychical nature, another plane ; and Divine Nature, another.

How is it possible, that men who only deal with nature in her last and lowest sphere of operation, namely the physical, should know anything about her? In order to any true insight into Nature, we must know her Parentage and beginnings: we must also take account of the intermediate conditioning causes, which play their part between first beginnings and final effects.

III. We must be very careful that we do not deny *Nature*, to Divine Nature. For if we deny Nature to God, there is nothing left in which Divine qualities can inhere; and nothing from which they can flow. The idea of God, apart from His Nature, would be just as groundless as the idea of humanity without man.

In order to the beginning of any just method of reasoning, you must ascribe the first principles of universal nature to Divine Nature. All souls derive their nature from Him: and all the heavens and all material worlds are modifications and revelations of one Eternal Substance. In other words, of all nature, whether spiritual or physical, God is the underlying and causative Nature. The supreme, unadulterated powers and virtues of all souls, and of all matter, are in the Divine Nature, and only in Divine Nature. How sublime the gradation from Divine Nature to human nature, and thence to outer nature. What is not possible to physical nature, is

possible to psychical nature, *i.e.*, to the souls of men ; and what is not possible to the souls of men, is possible to God—the Soul of souls.

But undeviating Law operates and rules from the Beginning to the end of Nature ; in Divine Nature, in spiritual nature, and in physical nature.

IV. By exact unerring processes of Law, our palm-trees, larches, etc., etc., lift themselves in a very direct way towards the sun. Atoms of matter are impregnated, vivified, and built up into living towers of verdure.

On the same principle man lifts himself from the plains of physical science, to the Alps of Divine Science. Remember that on the Alps of Divine Science, you still find Nature ; but Nature in her first potencies, her highest laws, her purest revelations, her loveliest forms.

Let me observe here, that it is a demonstrable fact that Divine Science in a man's soul, as compared with physical science, is an Alpine uplift of his soul. A man who goes up from the plain, and walks on the high mountains, *knows that he has gone up*. And every man who has gone up from the natural plane of his life, to the Divine-natural, *knows that the ascent is immense*. Moreover, he knows how the ascent was made, namely, by the development of an interior Energy in himself. Were you to ask the trees, by what energy they

lifted themselves out of the soil into the sky, the answer would be, The sun came down and lifted us up;—lifted us up, by entering into us, creating a stir, and an inclination, in our atoms to build themselves into an ascending life. The sun comes down into trees without leaving the sky; and God, without leaving Himself or Heaven, comes down into the soul; and becomes an uplifting Power within her affections and thoughts.

V. The analogy which our text suggests between trees of Vegetation and “trees of Righteousness,” we shall find both interesting and instructive, if we pursue it somewhat farther.

Very beautiful and suggestive is the Law by which the trees hold fast their connection with the earth, while ascending towards Heaven. Roots draw upward the finest essences of the earth out of their imprisonment; while the branches, with their breathing leaves, draw down the virtues of the heavens. Tree-development depends on the co-operation and unity of ascending and descending current of energy.

The “trees of righteousness” should learn of our fruit-trees *how to hold fast in the earth*, while stretching themselves sunward into light and liberty. Rooted in the earth, and branching away in the ethereal region! Let us do both; and *not leave the earth*, because we live in Heaven. Let us

hold fast the earth of our natural body, that we may have a form for the manifestation, on earth, of the heavenly life. How could the trees produce Heaven's fruit for the use of the world, if their roots quitted their hold of the earth? Very cunningly the trees breathe their escape from the soil; and at the same time very tenaciously, very determinedly cling to it. With the same breath, they say, We will leave the earth, and yet we will not quit it. We will go in for the ascensive life; but the higher we go, the more deeply will we root ourselves in the earth. And they do both.

VI. Let the children of Divine Wisdom learn this law of holding fast the earth while breathing the spiritual ether; and thus unite heaven and earth in their experience. There are two very opposite classes, who sever this unity. One class holds fast to the earth, declining to spend time and strength in aspirations towards Heaven. Whether they seek after treasure, pleasure, or science, they are equally sensual men. That is to say, their treasure, pleasure, or science, are all of the earth, earthy. Over against these are the morbidly spiritual;—I say morbidly, because their spirituality is not genial, not of heaven, but of the convent and cloister-species: not Christ like, the same on all days; but Pharisaic and Sabbatarian. Ascetics, and gloomy religionists of every class, seek after Heaven by

repudiating the earth. It is much more beautiful, and much more Divine to unite, than to divide. Any Heaven which estranges itself from the earth is not the true Heaven ; and if the earth cuts itself off from Heaven, it is no longer the Lord's earth ; but the earth of every illusion and delusion, the earth of vain hopes, and certain despair. Let us believe in the God of *Heaven and Earth*. There is no God of Heaven alone, nor of Earth alone. To His true children, His inspired children, both "Heaven and Earth are full of His glory."

With childlike unsophistical affections, let us love "the Maker of Heaven and earth ;" and love both for His sake. Let us beware of the sour species of spirituality which thinks to honour God, by despising His works. On the other hand, we will not be materialists,—held back from Him by His works. We will see, and feel, and enjoy Him in all His works. And after admiring Him in sunbeams and clouds, in rose-bushes and fruit-trees, we will go to His larger, fairer Paradise, and indulge in the same habit, of seeing, studying, and enjoying Him in His works there.

VII. The more tenaciously we hold fast to our root in the earth, and joyously branch Heavenward, now ;—the more intensely shall we root ourselves in Heaven, by and bye, and from Heaven branch downward to the earth. The "Trees of Righteousness"

have more branches, and also freer capacities for branching in all directions, upwards, downwards, sideways, than the trees of vegetation.

VIII. Let us adorn the earth, while we are here, like fruit trees, by our comely and useful lives : let us blossom, as well as bear fruit ; and more, let us be " trees of frankincense," which, in wafting their sweet odour heavenward, breathe it over the earth.

God's fragrance—breathing human trees, are trees of intense Life. The fountain of His Life rises in them, as the essential sap of their being ; and their very " leaves are for the healing of the nations." Through the health of God, which is in them, they are able to outbreathe the Divine virtue, and neutralize the poisonous element of immoral men.

Christ-like men and women, in their common every day routine, and in all their passive and silent states, like the leaves of fragrant plants, breathe out into the air of the world, healings and comfortings, which no one thinks of attributing to them.

IX. One of our inspired psalmists suggests that the trees have two other distinctions, which we have not named, that the birds *make their nest in them, and sing among their branches.* Birds are buoyant happy creatures ; they do not burden themselves with laborious provisions ; they have no anxious thought for to-morrow ; they know how to enjoy the earth,

and yet, at will, to wing themselves above it. No other creatures have the privilege of lifting their bodies above city towers and tree-tops; and of roaming at large in the clear ether.

They are like the blessed spirits who, enjoying their own freedom, neither envy the other creatures, nor make any boast of their own distinction. Without either sowing, or gathering into barns, they presume that the Heavenly Father means them to feed on the grain and fruits of the earth. In summer, they have great plenty, and in winter they pick up what they need for the day, without anxious thought for to-morrow. The Master saith, "they are worth considering:"—the light-hearted winged little creatures can teach you something.

X. Oxen and sheep sing not; the fish sing not; but the aerial creatures receive more inspiration than they can hold. In electric-musical waves they pulse it out upon the air.

And if human trees—"trees of Righteousness"—are verdant with the Divine Beauty, and fragrant with the Divine Holiness, the angels of Love and of Hope will surely sing in their branches.

Observe! the beauty-time of the trees is the singing time of the birds.

Let none of us be discouraged; for it takes time for seeds, and trees, and souls to put on their beautiful garments. Israel waited long, toiled hard, and

suffered much before coming out of Egypt ; but in process of time the day of deliverance came. Again they waited long, and sighed often in the captivity of Babylon ; and many died in captivity ; but the day came that the survivors came forth with mirth and singing.

And as certainly, on the wings of every hour, our new spring is coming, when clothed in Beauty, we shall break forth into song. Our wedding garment is weaving out of the Lord's Light, in the warm weather of our expectant souls. Divine virtues, like flowers, are unfolding ; angels are coming to make their nests in our bosoms, and lead in our new delights.

XI. Whatever be said of the dulness or deadness of our churches, one thing must be conceded ;—they have always been places of song. Christian pilgrims have always had an irresistible persuasion that they ought to be a singing people. The fear is that the singing is often a formality, mechanically done. Nevertheless, it is an acknowledgment that the pilgrims to Mount Zion should anticipate their eternal joy ; that they should sing themselves on their way to Humanity's Eternal Home.

Their songs are inspired by the knowledge of God's purpose. They believe in His Fatherhood ; they believe also that their happy childhood is His end. Therefore are their hearts stirred up to cele-

brate His perfect Love, and their own deathless Hope. Fear does not sing, doubt does not sing; but Hope sings, Love sings, and Love's confidence triumphs in Song.

XII. The question is, How shall we attain to real, inward, quenchless joyfulness? "My joy," said Christ, not this world's joy; "My joy I give to you." His Humanity is the directly begotten Firstborn of the Vitality of the Infinite Father; and we are branches from Him. His Life, springing and rami-fying through and through our inner nature, will make us green and flourishing even to old age,—trees of Life and Immortality.

Beloved, if your experience be only of your earth-born nature, how much there remains in you undeveloped? If the Fountain of God's Eternal Life is not yet opened in the secret depths of your souls, let the marvellous change wrought by the electric breath of Spring in the trees tempt you to ask God for *your new Spring*, with its new soul-thrilling experiences, and its prospects of Eternal Summer in the Heavenly Glory.

The distinction is quite unutterable between the blessed and the unblessed man: the one is "like the chaff which the wind driveth away;" the other "like a Tree planted by the rivers" of endless Life.

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE OLD, IS THE EVOLUTION OF THE NEW.

(Preached to the Albany Street Congregation, on June 27, 1886.
Dr W. Pulsford having withdrawn from the shell of his earth-
body on the 15th.)

" Our outward man : our inward man."

2 COR. iv. 16.

*" For we know that if the earthly house of our mortal
frame be dissolved, we have a building of God (another
body), eternal in the heavens."*

2 COR. v. 1.

OUR exodus from the dull, flesh-side of the universe, to its more vital soul-side, is a very kindling thought ; it keeps imagination on the stretch ; but to forestall it is beyond our power. The Divine intention is that we should nurse the idea, and get ready for the beautiful surprise. By a brief dream we shall cross the mystic sea, and find ourselves, some morning, in quite a new region of the sky, breathing the ether as we now breathe planetary air. If we outgrow the conditions of this world,—its impurity, its unreality, its guile and vanity, we shall by and by be transferred to society which will

be unspeakably restful and congenial. Blessed expectation! Delightful change of air! And made absolutely certain, by the fixed, unalterable laws of our Father. Every law of our Father is a law of Love.

It will be a continuation of our existence, and yet an entirely new beginning. There is something very impressive and even sublime in the method of departure. In perfect freedom, without packing, without a single encumbrance we go to our new country and home. With the nature which we have compacted in our inner humanity, with the knowledge we have acquired, and with the habits which we have formed, we shall leave the earth, and enter upon the farther development of our nature elsewhere. Therefore, if we are wise our great concern will be, to store up all the solid wealth we can in our underlying being. Purity, wisdom, goodness, beauty of character, and moral courage, are the treasures to be coveted; for these we shall take with us.

An "appointed time" is given to us, for electing the principles of our life, and for getting them rooted and settled in us, as the foundation on which to build our eternal character. Many years are not necessary to decide between our unreal flesh, and our essential identity; between the unreal world of our outer, and the real world of our inner man; and again, between a selfhood, without God, and a selfhood whose springs are in God.

"I will wait my appointed time *till my change comes.*" The man who keeps his migration in view, will not be taken by surprise. Calculating on his end here, he makes ready for his greater beginning.

"My change:"—my new mode of being! All the changes which have been arranged for us, by our Almighty Father, *mean progress*; unless by the vitiation of our inner nature, we invert His order, and create for ourselves a dark and troubled future.

If the Christ-life be in us, neither death nor any other power will ever come between us and God's Life. While death is relieving us of our outer, and non-essential shell, His Life will closely beset and encompass our essential nature.

II. It should be a very entertaining and delightful thought to every earth-born man, that he carries within his structure the law, and the plan of a "new man":—that he has both the design, and promise, in his nature of an ascent from his present level, to a higher plane.

Why are the laws of the animal world forbidden in the human world? Why are the habits of other creatures a shame and disgrace to man? The answer is,—he belongs to a higher plane. In yielding to the impulses and inclinations of his animal nature he transgresses the law of his being. There is a higher nature latent in him, an inner and a nobler personality, which must be vitalized, and

raised up in clear relief from the instincts and propensities of his animal soul. As our Lord avers, with His "Verily, verily:" a man can neither enter, nor see, the right human kingdom, until his inner nature is distinctly evolved.

III. For years and years, seed may be in circumstances under which the plan laid down in its structure cannot be carried out: So may *the essential man* for years and years, or for the whole course of his earthly existence, lie in deep sleep, shut up in his natural man. God has involved the germ and plan of *another man*, a very superior man, within the man of flesh.

IV. How could we soliloquize, and carry on long discussions and arguments with ourselves, if we were not two men in one? How could we resist the solicitations of one man who speaks in us, and obey the injunctions of another man, who equally speaks in us, unless we had two distinct natures?

How could each of us stir up his inner man to magnify and bless the Eternal God, our Father, if we were not two in one?

How could men who are as happy as the pleasures of the flesh and of the world can make them, be objects of Divine pity, unless they were two in one?

How could men congratulate themselves that they

are rich and prosperous, when Christ declares that they are poor and blind, naked and miserable, unless there were two men in one ?

How could the Spirit of God declare men to be dead, who think themselves very much alive, unless there were two men, where only one appears ?

With what reason could we cry in the ears of man : "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead," unless there were in him both a waking man to hear us, and a sleeping man to be wakened ?

Now as the inner man is by far the more real man of the two, ought not this to convince us, that there is an invisible world corresponding with our own invisible man, and that the world, which to our flesh is invisible, is much more real than the world in which our flesh lives, moves, and has its being ?

V. In virtue of our outer man, Earth is the mother of us all : in virtue of our inner man, Heaven is the Mother of us all. If earth is motherly, heaven is unspeakably more motherly. Earth is a coarser, ruder substance : heaven, a more refined substance.

Nature is full of shadows and analogies of these two substances, the outer and the inner. Water, air, and light, conceal interior and purer elements. Chaff in-wraps bread-corn : shells which are outer bodies for nuts are of one substance : the nuts which are inner bodies are a much finer, sweeter substance. Every seed is a two in one, and dies to live : the coarser

substance dissolves: the inner and finer, developes its treasured up forces in a new plant. Man is simply the highest, divinest illustration of a universal law.

VI. In the two distinct substances which we are contemplating, two very distinct processes are going on. The outer of the two is doomed to a perishing process: in the other, God works for renewal;—to qualify us for a new beginning, a future life.

In the Transfiguration of Jesus we have a lively, dramatic representation of the two men, in one. One man was approaching death: the other man had been undergoing a “day by day” renewing process. In His inner man He is already in Glory, associated with the angels. They talk with Him, and He is conscious of their inflowing strength.

VII. On our own part, the great aim should be, so to live in outward things, as to help, and not to hinder, the “day by day” transfiguring work in the inner man.

The first of all conditions is to maintain a love-connection with Him, in Whom the work is done. Through this love-bond,—beholding Him with the eyes of our heart, we gradually put on the new man, or as Paul puts it, we become “clothed upon” with our new humanity from Heaven. Our Lord, like a Sun in the new Heaven of the race, is constantly giving

out His Glory; or in other words and more fully stated, God our Infinite Father, is giving to us of the ocean of His Glory through Him. "The Glory which Thou gavest Me, I give to them." The conditions of receiving it, are tenderness of spirit, holiness of desire, singleness of eye.

The work which changes the inner man, and clothes him with ever more glory is carried on, while we look not at the things which are seen, but rather at those which flesh cannot see. Looking with desire, and taking in, are the same thing. No eye can look at the Light, without taking in its glory. The trees, the corn, the flowers, look steadfastly to the sun, receive his glory, and are changed from the glory of leaves, to the glory bloom, and from the glory of bloom, to the glory of ripe fruit.

Believe that in your inner man there are not only eyes, but myriads of little cells, in which the Glory of God can be stored up; and being stored up, will by and by clothe you with glory.

VIII. I do not say that all who are called Christians, have in them the divine joy of this glory. For too many, I fear, are not taking in the Divine Glory, and therefore are not undergoing the grand transfiguration. But as many as are receiving the Glory are becoming interiorly new men and women, and are joyful in hope. To *involve* anything includes the law and the promise of *evolving* the same.

Paul's joy abounded over all his afflictions. Imprisonments, chains, persecutions, stripes, old age, and everything that seemed to be against him, were all working for him, greater and greater degrees of glory.

We all have our bitternesses, sharp and cruel lacerations of our hearts, unlooked for sunsets, awful darknesses, while God and Heaven observe a maddening silence ; but if the new man, which is Christ, be forming in us, *we have deeper than all, an intense life which nothing can touch.* Even while the soul is wrung with sorrow, and bursting into convulsive sobs, the precious Christ-life flows deeply within, like a warm river of Divine sympathy. Heaven's cordial is the principal ingredient in our bitter cup : God's Love throbs in the centre of our agony.

The river of sympathy, which flows through our griefs, is composed of many streams. The affections of our angel brothers and sisters are in it, the affections of those who have been just snatched from us, and are entering on their beautiful surprise, are in it, and within all, as the Soul of all, is the Sympathy of God, through the Divine Man.

IX. We shall certainly not understand our Father's meaning in the mystery of this earthly life, unless we take into account the work which He is doing in us, through our griefs and tears. If earthly joy does much, earthly sorrow does more. It is when

the soul is stripped bare, and torn to its centre, that it awakes to a life higher than the stars. In the days that are most pleasurable to the flesh, the best powers of the soul are often clogged and earth-bound. But when anguish comes, the soul loosens from her bonds, aspires, and pierces holy Heaven with her affections.

And when cold, heartless death seizes our precious ones he is not wholly a destroyer. He is "the last enemy" of the good man ; but the good man, not the enemy, is victor. The enemy is "destroyed," "swallowed up : " the good man is "more than conqueror." The survivors too are "more than conquerors : " their love not only lives, but becomes holier and stronger. If love lives, we live ; and if our love be increased, we are advantaged, we are "more than conquerors."

X. This deathless Love is strictly God in us. "Our Father," "Thine is the Victory ;" and because it is Thine, it is Thy children's too. "Thanks be to God Who giveth *us* the Victory." He is our stronghold, the fastness which will for ever hold together those who love each other in Him. By holding to our life in Him, we hold to each other in Him. Our will is to live in Him : His will is to live in us. Death is helpless : He cannot invade the united wills of God and His children. "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes ;" but God is safe, and

His children are safe. "If I live, you shall live also."

"Comfort ye," my children, "saith the Lord:" comfort them with My Love. If the universe be dissolved, My Love will live on. The house in which My children pass their pilgrimage, will be dissolved, but My children will still be whole and entire, in a new house, suited to their new requirements. My sons and daughters are not earth, but buoyant, life-full, spirit-forms;—attached only for a little while to dull, lethargic, earth-bodies. In death their noble spirits are detached from their old, heavy, vehicles, and attached to new, lighter, vehicles. They disappear from their earth-bodies, in order that they may appear in their celestial bodies.

Because the earth-body is only of temporary use, it is called a "tabernacle:" but because the inner and celestial body is "a building of God," it is eternal, and for our eternal use.

XI. As soon as the severance from the earthly body is effected, the soulish body, which has been day by day, for years, refining and clarifying, begins more rapidly to be purified from all the remains of its fleshly defilement. As a plant which has acquired a good root in winter, grows rapidly, when summer comes; so, the inner man, which during the earth-life, has become rooted and grounded in the Christly nature, soon developes his full, glorious, human

form, under the summer glory of the heavenly regions. Relieved from the superincumbent flesh, the pure fire of the Divine Life, which was all but suffocated, glows forth, and the man appears in his luminous or glorified form. In other words, the earthly body quenches the indwelling Glory; while the future soulish body reveals it, as its ultimate clothing, or "wedding garment."

Clearly distinguish then, between what Paul calls "the body of this death," and your inner body of purer elements,—that "building of God,"—which is to show forth and illustrate the eternal principles, loves, and delights, of the Divine Nature.

XII. Of course heavy souls, who have been carnalized by their connection with the flesh, do not *rise* at death. Their weight of earthliness holds them down, and they must undergo searching processes of purification before they can begin to ascend.

But from those who are partakers of the pure, bright, Christ-nature, earthly deace withdraws the heavy curtains of the lower atmospheres, and they glide into the rosy light of Heaven's morning. Suddenly they find themselves, they know not how, in the midst of well-known friends. They are too much at home to wonder; nor does it occur to them, at first, to compare or contrast their new circumstances with their old conditions.

XIII. If any are at a loss to conceive how this

very different human body, this exquisite body, can be formed in, and come forth from, the earthly body, let me beg them to consider, how a glorious flower is formed within, and comes forth from, a dull stalk ? and how heavenly blossom comes out of dark woody branches ? What wood is drier than the vine-stock ? Yet rivers of wine annually come forth from those dry stocks. To me it seems *the very likeliest thing*, that there should be a future angel-son and daughter, forming within, and getting ready to come forth from, every earthly son and daughter of God.

The sun's virtue, within the most unlikely shell lying on the ocean's bed, forms a lovely pearl ; and forms veins of silver and gold in the dark earth ; so the God of all virtue and glory is forming a more electric, more vital human body, within the present opaque form.

XIV. Children and heirs of God, though at present under the twofold cloud of your own nature, and of impersonal nature, enter boldly into your Father's Eternal Purpose : live with confidence in the Perfect Love of it, and glorify your Father, by the courage of your Hope. Let us go up from the chills and fears of our momentary earth-life, into the Life which never began, and which therefore never will end.

In the substantial, unchangeable, endless Glory of our Father's Love, we have substantial, unhesitating, unchangeable comfort. The right is ours to go

forth from all our shadows into His Glory. Nothing can change, or finally becloud, the Purpose of His Fatherly Love.

What the veil of the material creation hides, and what our own material experience seems to belie, that Christ reveals. By His determination, as the Throne-Man of our race, to lead the Divine Element of our Father's Eternal Life and Glory into our nature, He has forced out all its corruptible elements, and thus abolished death.

This revelation of our Father's Purpose towards us, in Christ Jesus, should clear our mental sky, wonderfully help us in our struggle against depravity, make death a mere semblance, and fill us with surprising joy.

XV. Migration from one latitude to another, or from one hemisphere to another, is a very common thing ; and a thing of considerable interest. As for example, when one, like Abram, moves from a region of flats and mists, to one of running streams, gardens and hills. With what pleasurable emotions then we should contemplate our migration to another world. In a universe of worlds innumerable, who would like the idea of being imprisoned for ever in any one of them ?

Man is a form of Divine Love ; and his existence on earth is Love's humiliation ; Love's absence from Paradise ; Love's battle and progress ; leading to Love's Home-coming and eternal rejoicing.

GOING AWAY IN A LOWER FORM: COMING AGAIN IN A HIGHER FORM.

(Preached to the Trinity Church Congregation on August 1, 1886.)

"Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto Thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

JOHN xiii. 36 to xiv. 3.

THE desire to see Palestine and to roam over the scenes of our Lord's life is both natural and lawful; but let us never forget that we have something greater and better than Palestine, in John's Gospel.

To retire to some bower, or other seclusion, for ten minutes, and allow his words to instil into our hearts and minds, will do us more good than as many days in Nazareth, or Jerusalem.

I. The words quoted above were uttered at the Supper table, immediately following that everlasting memorial of the tenderness and humility of Jesus—the feet washing—and immediately preceding His last walk across the Kedron to the garden and the Mount of Olives. For all in all, the party at that Supper table was the most remarkable that ever met together in our world: the circumstances and associations are thrilling and influential, above all others in history. They sit together in silent amazement,—afraid to speak, almost afraid to think.

II. During the week alarming words have fallen from their Leader, Whom they feel to be even more Divine than He is human. Everything ominously points to a crisis, which they suspect to be tremblingly near. One of their party, Judas, has just gone out; and words were spoken to him from the Head of the table, which they do not understand.

But the Blessed One now looks on them more tenderly—seems to draw nearer to them, and begins to speak very endearingly: “Little children, we shall be together not much longer.” He

could not say, "Little children," while Judas was present. No one who has subtlety and hypocrisy in his heart is a little child. "Little children" are angels to be: "of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

Yet He says: "Whither I go, you cannot come." Peter is startled by the terrible words, and venturing to ask, "Why?" receives the softened answer: "You cannot follow me *now*;" I am ready to be glorified. *You* are not yet ready to be glorified; "but you shall follow Me afterwards."

III. And immediately He reveals to them the conditions under which they will ripen for glorification: "*Love one another as I have loved you.*" Abide in My spirit one toward another. A life of Divine Love has ripened My humanity for Heaven, and it will ripen yours. The Glory of God is pure Love, radiating from Him, filling Heaven with a sweetness of Splendour; it will also beautify, and at length glorify, every one on earth who walks in Love.

But you will have many a bitter experience of your own evil hearts, before you are perfect in love, and perfected by love. For the present your own self-love is far more deeply rooted in you than you know. In the coldness and hardness of it, you will yet often speak and act; in the heat of it, you will abandon Me, and even deny Me. Peter answers: If all the others deny Thee, I never will. The Lord replies: Peter, it is now near midnight; but,

before the dawn, you will find out how dominant is your love of self, and how weak your love to Me.

IV. Then, without a pause, or anything like the break which occurs in our division of chapters, He sought to fortify poor Peter against himself, that he might not be swallowed up of over much sorrow. Through your unfaithfulness to Me, you will be more deeply affected by My Faithfulness to you. You will all forsake Me, and flee for your own lives ; but I have prayed for you beforehand ; and " I will come to you," bringing into you such a flood of My Love, that your self-love will weep itself to death, and My Love, as the new fountain of your life, will spring in you for ever.

Remember, when your heart is bursting with grief, and your eyes shedding tears of bitterness, that My Spirit is the secret cause. If I were not dwelling in you, and moving upon the deepest springs of your being, you would not sin and *repent* ; but sin and *harden*. Your self-condemnation is from Me. Let it be a sign to you that I am cleaving to you, and that you through your sin *are* clinging to Me. " Let not your heart be troubled," therefore. Your own heart is not so much in you, as I am in you. The Divine Spirit is set more deeply in you, than your own souls, otherwise the words and actions of your souls would not distress you. Your self-love with all its depravities will have a lingering life

in you ; but it is doomed, because My Spirit blends with yours, and will blend more and more. The more I am exalted, the more shall I be able to inbreathe My Spirit into you.

V. "You believe in God, you believe also in Me ;" therefore, you do not believe in yourselves. The self in which you put no trust will grow weaker and weaker, and finally expire ; but God, whom you do trust, God in your Divine Human Friend, will never fail you. I will be a Human Medium to you of the Love of "My Father, and your Father."

"Let not your heart be troubled ;" through your very trouble, God is creating your new humanity. Whatever be the completeness of My Humanity, shall be your completeness.

God loves you, rest in that ; and I too love you ; for the Father Who loves you, lives in Me. Here you have solid ground on which to build your eternal Hope. The Love of God is the One Unchangeable Essence. The universe will change and change, and you will change and change ; but the Love which was before all things is the Same through all creations and destructions to Eternity. Rest, children, in your Father, and in Me. You are safe, and shall be safe, whatever happens. God is Divine Man in Me, and you shall be divine men through Me.

VI. True, for a little while, we shall be living in different worlds. But if I, as Perfected Man, live in Heaven, you, as perfecting men, will follow Me. Heaven is the final Home of perfect human forms living in the sensible Glory of the Eternal Father's Love.

Be not afraid. We shall meet again. The only Eternal and Almighty Law in the Universe, is Love's Law. All laws which are not from Love, are momentary. Over all separations, distances, deaths, Love prevails. Nothing can take you out of My Heart, nothing can take Me out of your heart. We shall meet therefore, and make home together.

Death has power over flesh, your flesh and Mine ; but Death has no power over Love. Death reaches not into God, nor into the sphere of God. The Glory of The Father is the proper sphere of His children. Your real identity is hidden from death, in God.

VII. My Love to you did not begin on Earth. It is not dependent, therefore, on the earth, nor on any other world. Love created all material and all heavenly mansions, as habitations for Love's children. "Let not your heart be troubled." If you grow old in one form of your nature, you shall grow young in another form of your nature. Love's resources are infinite. If the earths or the Heavens which Love has made for you, dissolve, the Love

which made them will make new Earths and new Heavens. You cannot count the worlds which float in space: nor can the mansions of the Great Father's Eternal House be numbered. Yet ever new mansions, for new races and peoples, are being created.

VIII. I go into the Heavens *to found a new world* for you, and your race.

There are innumerable mansions which are not adapted to you. You would not be at home in them. I will prepare for you *your own place*. I carry a new order of Humanity into the Heavens, from which, and according to which, a new heavenly creation will begin to evolve. I am the First of the new heaven, which I will people from your race. The unfallen angels have yet much to learn.

I introduce a higher Law, a more comprehensive Law, into the angelic Heavens. Powers are become subject to Me which have never been subject to the angels. My return to "My Father's House" will introduce a higher Law, and will be the founding of a fuller and more ultimate style of Humanity in the midst of the angels, than they have ever known. They will desire to be made flesh, that they may become richer in spirit.

IX. The new Heaven, of which I am the Foundation and the Beginning, is of necessity *central*. It is

central because it comprehends more than any former Heaven ; and will be more potent for good. In due time, when the multitudes out of every generation which I will gather into it, are organized, and operate as one Divine Energy, its influence will reach to the ends of sin, and to the depths of Hell. Such is the Father's plan for His House, that in its centre every virtue and peculiarity should be represented, and that it should have power over all evil, and bear an equal relationship to His fallen and unfallen races.

X. We know not at what rate other heavens are growing : many of them may be comparatively stationary. But the New Heaven founded by Christ must have been growing by millions yearly, century after century. And its energies, abilities, and organizations for good, must be growing and perfecting as rapidly as its population is multiplying. If young men and women could be got to dwell upon it, nothing is so fitted to kindle their lofty and pure enthusiasm as the prospect of emigration to this Kingdom of kingdoms,—the Kingdom of the Incarnation in redeemed humanity. The highest places and honours of the political world are not worthy of the soul's enthusiasm ; but the final kingdom of humanity is quite worthy of the soul's loftiest passion.

XI. The kingdoms of Europe, including our own, and indeed the kingdoms of the whole world, are in ceaseless effort to make themselves invulnerable ; and at the same time are shaking with fear ; because they are aiming at the impossible, namely, to make kingdoms secure, which in their character and order are utterly opposed to the Kingdom of the Human race which the Father of men is forming in the heavens. It is worse than useless to shirk the fact that the kings of the earth and the rulers are not moving in unison with, but against "The Lord and His Christ." But because He is Man, according to God, Ideal Man, and Ideal King, His throne and the Kingdom which is grown round about His throne, disturb, and will disturb, and eventually overcome, all antagonistic rule and authority. The myriads whom He has drawn into sympathy with Himself, constitute the only "Kingdom which cannot be moved."

This is the Kingdom which all Christ-lovers are receiving down into their souls ; and which makes us calm and confident amid all the heavings and convulsions of the nations.

The Divine human race is destined to break up, supersede, and supplant the undivine race. Every man and woman added to the Kingdom increases its power ; and increases, likewise, the momentum with which its power moves downward into the souls of men, and into the air of the world.

XII. This new Kingdom of the Race growing in the Heavens can do nothing less than subdue the world to itself. Think of the incalculable number of men and women who are already in it ; and who, from the depth of their sympathy with Christ, make one Power : think farther, that in every one of them, the immutable Nature of God is built up ; and you will not be able to doubt that in the end the kingdoms of this world will become one Brotherhood of men under God.

Wherefore, we pray you to foresee the decreed end to which things are coming ; and draw down the elements of your new, immutable, all victorious humanity into your souls. You cannot belong to the Divine kingdom of our race nor go into it, unless first the Kingdom comes into you. Love, Incorruption, Certainty, Joy, Eternity, are in the Kingdom : receive its descending Power. Inbreathe the Divine Man's Breath, and you are His. Remember His words : " I will come and receive you to Myself."

Receiving you to Himself means your entrance into your own home and among your own people, in the midst of the men and women, who like you having loved, lived, suffered, and died, on earth, have found death to be a birth into the Divine and Eternal human life.

XIII. Finally, those brief words : " I go away and come again," ring out upon our ears *a universal law*,

which it will be wise for us all to ponder. Nothing goes away, which does not come again in another form. Our old sins come back as ghosts swarming about our pillow; they force themselves upon us whether we will or not. How some of us wish we had never created those ghosts. *The spirit of every act lives.* Our virtues come back bringing honours with them. Your good works, your disinterested acts of service, will come about you after death, and crown you.

More, from your new and intenser life in Heaven, you will return to bless those who knew and loved you. No good mother, or father, no earnest pastor or teacher ever goes away without coming again. There is always more pathos in their voice, and more tender persuasion in their presence, when they return, by the inner door, into our very souls.

"It is expedient for you that I go away;" for by going from you, I will come into you, a Spirit in your spirit. What is true of Christ is also true in a degree of every member of His body. When therefore the outward ministry of a Pastor and Teacher has ended, the beginning of a more vital ministry within the bosom should be looked for.

XIV. Beyond all, we may surely reckon upon the personal coming of our dearest friends to meet us, when we are loosening from the house of our mortality, and going forth to join them. For we must

believe it to be a law of our Father's House, that whoever are most akin to us, most in sympathy with us, and most inwound with our affections, will come to meet us in the air, and bear us along love's way, to our own home.

The nearest of kin to our inmost souls, may be persons whom we have never yet seen. Not till death did Lazarus see his angel-friends, who carried him to the society of his eternal kindred. Exquisite rest ! Fulness of Joy in the satisfaction of Love !

HORSES AND BELLS! AND BOTH ALIKE,
“HOLINESS TO THE LORD.”

“In that Day, there shall be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.” ZECH. xiv. 20.

PERHAPS the reader will say of the writer : He must have been in very great want of a text before he chose one like this. But he is not able to confess to that. Texts and subjects too multiply in his hands greatly beyond the opportunities which are given for speaking, or writing, about them.

To speak the truth, he did not seek the text : it rather sought him. He did not select it ; but again, and again, it returned offering itself, saying, “Take me.” I turned from it, saying, I do not see my way to the inside of it. The charm and life of a house are within the house, and the charm and life of Scripture are within the Scripture. But back, and back, came the words ringing in my ears, until I said : “Words are not enough ; you must show me my way into them.” Then a train of thought began to flow in upon me, which, as nearly as I can, I now embody.

I. These old prophets are terribly severe in their denunciation of all sin and unrighteousness. But having spoken of the judgments which must overtake, chastise and purge, unrighteous nations, and unrighteous persons ; afterwards, they call us to behold these very nations and persons, passing through the gate of repentance, and finally exhibiting faultless righteousness, beauty of character, gladness of heart, and living in Paradises of plenty and beauty, 'corresponding with the new virtues which they have acquired. The men who speak with a burning zeal for truth and purity of life, embellish notwithstanding, every subject which they take in hand, and lead all discords into music.

When they speak of the coming of the Great Leader of the nations,—He comes in meekness and uttermost humility,—is comparatively unattractive, almost unnoticed,—then rejected, ill-treated, and killed ; but after that, He wins the nations, and greatens, and greatens, on His all-conquering course, until the whole human world is at His feet ;—at His feet, not to be humbled and oppressed, but to be filled with His goodness, principled in His righteousness, glorified in His Light, made rapturous in the greatness of Hope, and exultant in the certainty, the fulness, and the everlastingness of final triumph.

For poetic genius and wealth of imagery, the old prophets greatly surpass the apostles. The latter, living with Jesus, daily walking and talking with

Him, were perhaps too near to the infirmity of His assumed flesh, too near His Cross, too absorbed by His Cross, to call in the aid of Nature and the Universe to illustrate the grandeur of His Humanity and His Kingdom. The prophets were absorbed in the contemplation of the distant, the ideal, they lived in the poetic element of unrealized expectations: the apostles were plain, matter of fact men; --very dull and heavy companions for the Ideal Man, the Prophet of prophets. "How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?"

II. Observe that this passage, in which our prophet speaks of *horses* and *bells*, is at the close of his book; after he has spoken of the purging and renewal of the race. And whatever interpretation you assign to his words, it is clear that they point to an age of greater liberty and gladness, of ripe intelligence, associated with unhesitating demonstrations of mirth. It is impossible to foresee in what new ways, the harmony of our nature, both with itself, and with God, will celebrate its joy. Let God and the heavens and mankind, make one; and the former conditions of nature and humanity "shall not be remembered nor come into mind." "Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create."

III. Perhaps you are unable to appreciate the

symbols—Bells ! and Horses ! You are not prepared for the strange association of—musical Horses ! and “Holiness to the Lord !” You ask, Are not horses proud enough without Bells ? Ask another question : Have not handsome horses something of which to be proud ? Perhaps for all in all, their organism is the most shapely and majestic animal-form on the earth. They are signs and pledges of sagacity and power, confidence and victory. The head of the creature is projected into fine relief, for dignified elevation, for freedom of play, and for elongation in the race. With what quick intelligence, the eye flashes ! what sensibility and power, the nostrils express ! how easy and supple the motion of the ears, by which the creature intimates both its proud carelessness, and its acute apprehension :—then in a moment, how erect, and rigid their tension, if any new object or sound suggests alarm ! what nervous power, and readiness for action ! what pride and spirit flash from its mane ! what an absence of cunning and malice in its face ! To which add its companionable qualities, its tractability, obedience to the word of command, general usefulness, and swiftness of feet. Docile enough to obey the gentlest pressure of the reins, it is yet proud enough to resent ill-treatment ; it has mind enough to understand man’s words and tones, it is loving enough to return his caresses. If in love you pat its neck, or face, without hands, it will stroke you in return.

IV. What need has such a creature of Bells? Has it not glory enough without bells? But tell me why shrill music should not be coupled with distinction of form? The sublimest towers that architecture can raise, on great occasions and festivals, break their silence, and ring out their fame. The Church has its Bells. How lowly the foundations! how reverential the superstructure! how grand, how daring the spire! Yet it asks for the shrill clangour of the bells. Humility, nobility, and bells! Love, worship, and bells! When heaven touches earth, and the earth touches heaven,—Bells! When Bridegroom and Bride are made one, ring out ye bells! The priest on great days was required to announce his entrance into the Most Holy Place by bells! when he represented Highest Man, and man at his highest, he wore bells:—pomegranates and bells! "Pomegranates!" because highest uses are associated with highest refreshment. "Bells!" to express a ministry which swings between time and Eternity. Let there be sounds in the world, which are more than world: let the air become a resonant stairway, pulsing upwards towards heaven and eternity, more meaning than articulate speech can carry.

V. But—you may be perfectly sure, that "horses" and "bells," when a seer, or prophet, speaks of them, stand for more than horses and bells. His horses and bells ascribe "*Holiness to the Lord.*" Metallic

bells have neither holiness nor sin. The animal horse, in like manner, being incapable of the thought—God,—comes not within the sphere of Holiness.

The poetic thought of the prophet leads us into the very centre of the Lord's prayer: "Hallowed be Thy Name." The ascription involves the loftiest intellectual conception, combined with reverential love. "Holiness to the Lord" indicates the highest human distinctions. When man is "light in the Lord," the white horse of his intelligence discerns the beauty, the sublimity, the adorableness and blessedness of the Divine Name. "Hallowed be Thy Name!" Whole-orbedness—every attribute of Perfectness, to the Lord! Every essence and virtue, every power and glory are in Thy Name. Whether in men with luminous bodies, or men with opaque bodies, this worship is only possible within the hearts and minds of *men*; and only possible in them, because they are mirrors, and likenesses of God.

Divinely luminous and harmonious human Intelligence expresses itself in wonderfully ringing cadences. All sweetest music, all triumphal music in earth and in heaven, are celebrations and demonstrations of the harmony between human intelligence and the Name of God. Truthful, heartfelt, glorifications of the Divine Name go pealing, at once, through time's sky and eternity's sky. "Bells" indeed!

VI. Ancient India and Egypt, Assyria and

Greece, assume that the horse is the symbol of lofty intelligence. Their *winged* horses represented both the majesty and the ethereal power of the intellect. Apollo, the sun-god, rides in a chariot drawn by celestial horses, fleet as the light.

The Greeks also say, that the nine Muses issued from a fountain, which a horse pawed open. And it is most true, that the pawing of the Intellect has opened the fountain of every art and inspiration.

Elijah's ascension, or transmutation, is represented under the symbol of being carried up into heaven, in a glowing chariot, drawn by celestial horses. But before the moment of his rapture from time to eternity, the fiery earnestness of Divine Truth had been purifying his heart, and exalting his mind. The chariot of fire and horses of fire represented his condition—the end of a long, patient, regenerative process. And if you desired to exhibit dramatically the vehemence of celestial attraction, as it affects a celestialized soul, could you do it better than by such symbolism?

When the prophet speaks of God as riding upon His "horses of salvation," what can the horses be, but the exalted Truths which are bearing up the inner man, and carrying him on and on, through Divine processes of transfiguration?

VII. By bells on the horses, then, we must understand the joyous and triumphant condition of the

human intellect, when it lives under the influence, moves among the eternal verities, and realizes the significance of the Divine Name. "I will set him on high, *because he hath known My Name.*" The joy and the triumph of this exaltation, are, "Holiness to the Lord." The intellect moves in a fine majestic play of freedom, and yet there is in it nothing capricious, nothing lawless. It is the intellect glorying in the steps and progress of infinite Law, eternal Law ; but there is in it no taint of self-glorification. The regenerated intellect glories in the heights, depths, and harmonies of the Divine Name. "Hallowed be Thy Name." "Holiness to the Lord." Such a man, with such watchwords, *is an Apollo*, careering through the heavens of thought, on his white horse, and exuberantly proclaiming that his progress and his victory are from God, in God, and unto God—to "the praise of His glory." "HOLINESS TO THE LORD, on the bells of the horses"! Such a man must go on "conquering and to conquer," for evermore !

VIII. The allegorical horse of the Heavens is represented as leading down the Kingdom of Love, Joy, and Beauty, into the souls of men. Ring out ye Bells:—"Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory!" "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty : for all that is in the heaven and in the

earth is Thine ; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all." "He rideth in His Excellency, on the Heavens, for thy help." That is, He is borne down, in, and by, our kindred above, to their kindred below. The myriads of our perfected race are His chariot. He dwells largely in them, and they would that He dwelt more abundantly in us.

"The WORD," the Truth, the Universal Harmony of Divine and human Intelligence, is the White Horse ; and those in whom the all-harmonic WORD is centred, constitute the great army, who are said, symbolically, to be following the lead of Christ, on "white horses." With exaltation of mind, because they know His Name ; and with purified hearts, for they are made white ; moreover, they mean victory. They will not pause, nor be discouraged, until they see the pure and beauteous Humanity of the Heavens in the human race below.

Let me quote from the prophetic vision : "I heard as it were the noise of thunder, . . . and I looked, and behold *a White Horse* : and He that sat on him had a bow ; and a crown was given to Him : and He went forth conquering and to conquer. . . . His Name is called, THE WORD OF GOD, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS ; and the armies in Heaven followed Him upon *white horses*, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." All the symbols, observe, are good signs.

By "white horse" understand the unadulterated Truth of God, Truth wholly free from self-seeking, from carnality, and every worldly principle : understand, likewise, innocence, peace, joyfulness, power, and victory. By "the bow" is signified the direct and self-piercing character of Pure, Divine, harmonic Truth.

The "crown" given to Him, signifies that infinite God is with Him, and in Him, for the Soul of His ministry. God is the Spirit and Crown of His perfected human life. The Scriptures are the verbal expression, but He is the Personal Embodiment of the Truth of God.

Whole armies of our race, His followers and admirers, who have been "made white," share His power and glory, and go forth with Him, "conquering and to conquer."

If in your dream, or in visions of the night, Heaven were opened to you, as to John in Patmos, and you saw a vast white-horse cavalcade in motion, you would understand it to mean conquest by Love, and to signify marriage in the highest,—the marriage of God and the Soul, of men and of angels, of heaven and earth. And before the beloved John closes the record of his visions, he tells you distinctly that this is what it does mean ; and that Lord Jesus and those who are with Him will not pause in Love's great work of conquest, till it be accomplished.

IX. And from the connection in Zechariah, you will see that the prophet is speaking of the Dominion of our Lord Christ, in His Divine Humanity, over the world. He is come to the close of his prophetic utterance, and affirms: The Lord shall be King over the whole earth. In that day, His Name shall be One, and mankind shall be one under Him. (xiv. 9.) "In that day," men shall be full of God,—luminous with the White Light of Divine Intelligence, and full to overflowing of the gladness and confidence of Victory. "In that day, shall there be upon the bells of the horses, 'HOLINESS TO THE LORD.'"

X. Humanity in the Heavens rings bells of triumph, and humanity on earth takes up the glad refrain. By pulses of Inspiration the music of our brothers and sisters above, reproduces itself through the souls of their brothers and sisters below. Te Deum, "We praise Thee, O Lord." Heaven floats down in our Hallelujah Chorus, and our life on earth for evermore is richer; and never more will we allow Heaven and earth to be sundered. The songs of humanity are increasing in volume and harmony, and increase they will, until the whole world is filled with the music of God's praise and human joy. Zechariah's day has come: the sky-horses of the world's intellect are ringing out "Holiness to the Lord."

Let us learn that Intelligence, at its height, is

always musical ; and not until it is musical, or harmonious, is it right human. In a joyous musical descent of His Truth, God comes down to us ; and by the same joyous musical Highway we ascend to God. Truth from God comes singing into Time, and sings us through Time, until the pilgrim-song of mortality melts into the Home-song in Heaven.

XI. Are some of us trudging through the world, with no celestial chariot in which the soul can recline, and no celestial horses to carry us Home ? Heavy work to carry our own weight, and to hold on our wearisome way, with no joy-bells of God ringing about us.

Ye foot-sore and weary, the chariot of your exalted life with its white horses and bells awaits your use. Your friends above are pleading with you to begin now a higher soul-life. "Come up higher" !

XII. Thou Everlasting King of Glory, Word of God expressed, Humanity's King, uplift us above the common, dusty, road of mortal life, lift us into Thy Life, above the infirmities, above the weight, of our flesh ; and as we rise above corruption and death let us hear the joy-bells of eternity ringing our welcome.

SKY AND SUN.

"The Sun is as a Bridegroom coming out of his chamber." PSA. xix. 4, 5.

"O Lord, my God, Thou art very great : Thou art clothed with Honour and Majesty : Thou coverest Thyself with light as with a garment : Thou stretchest out the heavens like a curtain." PSA. civ. 1, 2.

"Who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky." DEUT. xxxiii. 26.

"Extol Him Who rideth upon the heavens, and rejoice before Him." PSA. lxviii. 4.

LET it be confessed, that the design of the present discourse is to create a greater interest in the sun and sky. They ought to be sources of great pleasure ; as much to our reason, as to our emotions. They are not God ; but they are sublime revelations of His Nature, His Beauty and Goodness. And more, He is present with us, in them, ceaselessly operating through them for our benefit, and at the same time giving delight to soul and sense.

I. We are taught annually that the earth, *in*

herself, is so much cold, dark, sterile, matter ; and that the heavens are spirit vitalizing her matter, and making her fruitful. The season of Hope returns once more ; joy is possible. In the absence of the sun, the dull, heavy laws of matter prevail : in his return, spirit and life prevail ; and by their songs the birds lead us into a new heaven and a new earth.

The blood-red ray of the Sun quickens universal nature, makes all creatures happy, and all trees, trees of Life. This transfiguring ray is not light, but hidden in light, robed in Light ; and corresponds with the Pure Fire, or Love, of God, which renews the soul. Love is the Alchemist in nature : Love is the Alchemist of the Soul. The Love of God, operating through the mighty Soul of Christ, and the Love of God, clothed with the solar element, are one Love, differently conditioned. No one who contemplates the effects of solar influence on the plant, and on the bodies and souls of all creatures, can have a doubt of its being a vehicle of Love.

II. For inspiration, for beauty, for health, and refreshment, for a sense of freedom and the enlargement of the soul is there any thing like the summer sky ?—that is, the sky, when it is allowed to be sky, and not buried by earth's vapour, nor desecrated by city smoke ? Again, for teaching, for sublimest

teaching, for pictorial grandeur, for tenderness and for strength, for measurelessness and everlastingness, is there anything like the sky? How it attracts us! draws us all out of doors! how it rewards us! And what wonder, for in the sky, the great Soul meets us face to face, and blends His Spirit with our spirit. In the morning, the motherly sky kisses our eyelids open, bathes us with her luminous ether, and invigorates us. In the evening, she liquefies soul and body into unity, and tranquillizes us. In the morning, she is vital enough, intense enough, to enter into, and flow through, every nerve, every blood-globule, every atom. In the evening, she indraws us, to a sky within the sky, as to a mother's bosom, while the outer sky becomes a soft awning over and around us.

III. By His sky, the God of all consolation soothes our inmost affections, at the same time that He provokes thoughts too large for utterance. If the Divine Light be kindled in us, then a sight of the sky feeds our reverence, quickens worship, lifts us above fear and distrust, begets a faith which "sees the Invisible;" and bids us go on our way, rejoicing in the greatness of our human Hope.

Whenever, therefore, you lose heart, and become weary and doleful within the narrow limits of your earthly personality, liberate yourself, go out of your house, pay a visit to the sky, talk to her, and let he

talk to you, until she delivers you from your littleness and gloom. Her largeness answers to the soul's craving for room to breathe, for more knowledge, and a freer life.

IV. All prophets refer us to the sky ; and assure us that the glory which we see, veils a glory which mortal eyes cannot see. What we call sky is a succession of tenuous ethers between our vision and the Divine Glory. "He holdeth back the face of His throne," spreading out before it, veil upon veil, ether upon ether.

The word translated "sky" in Deut. xxxiii. 26, and elsewhere, is plural, for it is literally composed of metallic ethers. See Job xxxvii. 18. "Hast thou with Him spread out the sky," (plural) "which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?" Indeed, the word is often rendered in our translation by a plural noun, as for example in 2 Sam. xxii. 12. Psalm xviii. 11. "His pavilion round about him were thick clouds of the *skies*." Also in Isa. xlv. 8. "Drop down ye heavens from above, and let the *skies* pour down righteousness."

The ethers are more solid than any metal, and the metals are capable of being converted into ethers again. Nothing is so solid, nothing so strong, as the everlasting sky. It is the soul and essence of all gold and silver ; and the golden Glory of God, or Pure Love, glorifying Love, may be drawn out of

the Sky into your soul. The sky is pure substance and the mother of all substances. The densest things, and things most attenuated, are all one primal substance. The sweet transparency, which we call ether, is equally akin to spirit and matter. One word expresses both ether and spirit. The Breath of God, or the Holy Spirit, is *living* ether, Divine ether; and the ether of the sky is equally the clothing of His Spirit, and the matrix of matter. It is "stretched out," above and beyond the atmospheres of all worlds; and is to all who behold it a mirror of the Infinite Spirit.

V. To us, whose apprehension of God is so feeble and dull, the great advantage of the clear, boundless ether is, that it is the robe of His Omnipresence, and actually transmits His Vitality. It overarches us like a tent, and is like God, strong, pure, infinite, and endless. It is the first of His ministering angels, always present, always beautiful, always blessing us; and without sound, teaching us more than all sounds and voices ever taught, or can teach.

We must carry over, therefore, the whole sky, and all that is in it, into our Gospel; otherwise our speech will do injustice to God, and be unworthy of the sublime silence of the infinite ether.

VI. But what is the lesson conveyed by the great

alternate changes of the sky? Now it is sweetly luminous, and now a solemn darkness. Strictly speaking, as we all know, there is no change in the sky at all. It is always an infinite Darkness, and always lit up by myriads of stupendous suns. But we should not know this, if the earth did not turn on her axis, and successively face the sun, and again turn away from him.

To the turning of our planet from the sun, we owe our knowledge of the universe. In the symbolism of its darkness and light, we have our sublimest revelation of God. Light which is called God, and is God, issues for ever from the Infinite Bosom of His Darkness. Darkness and Light are both alike to Him; for He is as much one, as the other. The Son of God, the only begotten Light, reveals the "*Father of Lights*," as suns reveal the ether. God presents Himself in the Light, but also conceals Himself: as we both present ourselves and hide ourselves in our garments. "Thou *coverest Thyself* with Light as with a garment." As the infinite ether is hidden by the daylight, even so is God hidden by the Light of the angelic heavens, which reveals Him. Therefore, all those who dwell in the Eternal Light, worship the Unseen God, and live "as seeing the Invisible." They know that Light is but His Effluence. They worship the Light, as God; and again, with silent ineffable adoration, they worship what is behind the Light.

VII. Venerable, wonderful, Infinite Darkness, whence could Light come, but out of thy womb? Life and Light are one; and yet as distinctly two, as active and passive, or as the two poles of humanity, masculine and feminine. Indeed, whatever is in the light acknowledges its dependence on darkness. Gold, silver, and all jewels, are the "treasures of darkness." Branches which blossom and bear fruit, must have corresponding roots in darkness. We are instructed also to revere darkness in ourselves. None of our organs which are in the light are vital: *the vital organs abide in darkness.* The human face reveals and covers a human depth. The brain, heart, lungs, and viscera do their work in darkness, and supply the surfaces of the body, including the face, with whatever vitality they have.

O Light, thou universal loveliness! O Life, thou infinite unsearchableness! *Light* is cheering, exhilarating; it is the eye of Life, the glance, the smile of Life; but *Life* is more. God is the infinite Mine of His own Light, "which is as a Bridegroom coming forth from His hidden chamber." We worship the all-beauteous Visibility, we worship the awful Invisibility. O sun, God is in thee; and through thee I see Him. Yea, I feel Him: His Potencies and Virtues stream upon me through His garment. Thou art His garment. The garment would be powerless, if God did not wear it and

charge it with His energy. Strictly speaking, the One Living Spirit-Sun is the all and in all of the astronomical suns. They are only suns, because their electric atmospheres embody, reflect, and transmit the Living Sun. Impregnated with the Living Sun our souls live, and impregnated with the solar beam all nature lives.

VIII. Thou "Father of lights"! we are even more the children of Thy Love, than of Thy Light. Because our inmost soul is a fathomless love, we know that we are Love-begotten. Therefore if we seek Thy Light, much more do we seek Thy Life. Constrained by our birthright, we seek to penetrate into Thy "Secret Place," within the curtain of Thy Light. Thy Light hath "Majesty;" but Thy Life is very meek, and mother-like; Thy Light goads our intellect; but in Thy Life there is great rest.

"Blessed," "blessed," yea, seven times "blessed" saith Jesus, are ye who have the virtues of My Father's Life. His Life is the Humility of Love, the changelessness of Love, the endlessness of Love.

IX. Who can speak of the children, who are folded within this mantle of God, this tent, and curtain of the sky? All the inner and inmost heavens of His angels, and all the material heavens, are "a tent to dwell in":—the Almighty Father's tent for His offspring. "Lift up your eyes, and

behold " the countless homes ! What figures could represent the children dwelling in one solar system ? How unthinkable, then, the thought of the children in all the constellations which bestud the sky ? A family large enough, truly, to occupy and interest us —strangers enough to entertain us, and to be entertained by us, to eternity.

One blue tent comprehends all ; nothing is so firm, so fixed. It is "settled for ever," a tent "which cannot be moved." Winds may blow and storms rage, in the planetary atmospheres ; but the eternal Ether which overspreads and embraces all is the children's one "strong," imperturbable Habitation. "Thou art our Dwelling-place in all generations."

The Infinite Father's sleeping and waking children, dying and resurrected children, throughout the universe, sleep and wake, die and rise again, within His all-breathing tent of azure and gold.

X. Let us see, therefore, that our immediate conditions do not domineer over our greater Hope. When disheartened in ourselves, let us "give glory to God," until new health and courage invigorate us. We are spirits ; but for "a little while" enthralled in the darkness and bondage of matter. We all of us have our wild-fire, our capricious passions, our fermenting corruptions ; a heavy chaotic night lies upon us, and the wrath-storm which our

sins have created, often makes us tremble ; but over all, around all, is the tent of God ; and through every point of the enveloping ether, comes the Divine Ether, diffusing itself through our souls, until a new cheerfulness reigns in our hearts, and new reasonableness in our minds. "The Word of the Lord," being the Law of His Love, runs very swiftly, "converting the soul," bringing a new spring-time to the soul. And the cleanness of heart which follows God's purifying Breath, is not a cold and barren whiteness ; but a warm, living, fruit-bearing Righteousness, as of Heaven's summer opening within the soul. "Be ye glad, and rejoice for ever, in that which I create, saith the Lord."

XI. Things on earth may fail us, the body of our flesh may fall away from us ; but the powers which work in the heavens, for us, are infinite and endless. What if we die on earth, the heavens are full of creating Love, and will form new bodies about us, for new experiences, in new worlds. The Good God is everywhere, and where He is, creative Goodness is. "He rideth on the heavens *for thy help*." His Potent Goodness can no more remove, than the Ether can remove. "My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of My Peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." Therefore we must "boldly say : The Lord is my Helper, I will not fear."

The Sky is full of Help, because it is full of God. Could you fly with the swiftness of light millions of millions of millions of leagues in any direction, and these multiplied by billions of billions, and quadrillions of quadrillions, you would still be in the sweet ether, which is the Creating Bosom of God. "Lo! I am with you always," every where. Are not all worlds carried tenderly in the embrace of the Ether? The Christ-Spirit of our Father is not less plentiful than the Ether; and visits our souls more closely, more vitally than light visits our eyes. Think, when you look up into the sky:—It is Jesus spread out; for Jesus is simply a revelation of Infinite God's besetting Love. His Breath entering into His child's soul begets assurance; and with joyous triumph he exclaims: The Eternal, Every-where-Present God is the strength of my life; of what shall I be afraid? And the Divine Spirit replies: "Fear not," fear nothing; "I am with thee;" "and because I live, you shall live also." I could not respect my own Life, yea, my Life would cease to be a Joy to Me, if I ceased to live in you.

XII. Oh, how literally does He "ride on the heavens for our help"! In the souls and spirits of our forefathers and foremothers, in countless angels, His Help is stored up for us. Are they not all ministering Spirits?—ministering what they have received from God, to those who are in need. For

we, and they, are Love's children;—"one family." They are the living heavens, on which God rides; and we are children on the lower floor looking up for Help. "Our Help cometh from the Lord Who made Heaven and earth"; but it cometh through millions of souls, in whom He more fully dwells.

When the overpowering faintness steals upon us, and the outer man is expiring, kindred spirits with the Divine Spirit in them, "for our Help," will flock about us. We shall die in God's tent, and die into more Life. Ceasing to breathe the planetary atmosphere, we glide into, and breathe, a more ethereal atmosphere;—an atmosphere full of love and joy, inspiring us with a home-feeling of rest and confidence. It is ever through those who have a nature like our own, that the Help of God comes to us;—through our mothers and fathers, through our wives and sisters, through our human angels, and our human Christ.

XIII. The consolatory conclusion to which we are brought, is, that the whole universe is *full of God*; but that souls are the first and chief Habitation of His Life. "God is a Spirit"—Sun in the Bosom of His own Infinite Ether; and as is the Divine Nature, so is the universe, which is an outbirth of the Divine Nature. Everywhere, throughout immensity, there is seen a Sun shining in the bosom of the ether. The suns are the vitality, the glory, and the activity of

the ether which is round about them. Each sun quickens its own family of planets, and makes them pregnant. He sows his glory into the planets, and thus glorifies them.

The Glory of God is not mere splendour : the Divine Majesty has His own Central Form, the First-Born, Who is the Beginning and the Ideal of humanity. And all the children, who are personal centres to the universe, are in His Likeness. In them the universe attains to self-consciousness, understanding, love, and enjoyment of itself. How much therefore it behoves man to know himself, not alone for his own glory and joy ; but that he may fulfil his obligations both to his divine race and to the whole creation. If the Glory of God be quenched, or dimmed in the centre of his spirit, he is as though the sky were without a sun. The ether of his spirit is without a sun. He is a cold, timid, doubting spirit, tossed about on the dark billows, neither knowing whence he came, nor whither he is going. And because it is so with him, the whole creation suffers for his sake. For when he who is God's son, and her prince, is centrally cold and dark, she is deprived of her most essential, most vital, and blessed influx.

All nature is waiting for the true sons and daughters of God. She groans and travails in pain, until the central glory, which is the life and soul of her harmony, be kindled in them.

Be instructed ye fallen children of God ; let the

sky teach you Wisdom. She speaks on this wise :
If the sun were not kindled in my centre, my whole
heaven would be a cheerless void, and my earth a
desolation. So is the whole heaven of your spirit
dark, and the earth of your body deficient of its first
virtue, when God, the Spirit-Sun, is not a kindled
Reality in the centre of your souls.

OF GOD IN NATURE.

*"Thou renewest the face of the earth.
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.
My meditation of Him shall be sweet.
I will be glad in the Lord."*

PSA. civ. 30, 33, 34.

GOD has an outer gate of approach to us, as well as an inner gate. Nature is His outer gate. He comes in material substance, to our material bodies. Through our senses, He enters our souls : through the gratification of our desires, His Love glides into our hearts. Our wintry religion melts away and expires in His Summer-Presence. In the new climate we sing and rejoice before Him. Our flesh is quite as eager as our souls, and our souls as eager as our flesh, to welcome Him in His new manifestation. There is strictly a coming of God every year. He comes anew into Nature's skies, and Nature's earth. Every new Spring is a Revelation of our Father. Let us see Him, feel Him nigh, in the flowering meadow, in the fragrant pine wood, and in the happy birds ; and warm towards Him as Jesus did.

II. God's new coming makes an appeal to our whole nature : we cannot say that our hearts are more delighted than our minds, nor our minds than our senses. Our whole humanity welcomes His pleasure-bringing season. Heaven and earth coalesce : spirit and matter blend. And not until both are a unity in our experience, is there room for God's Presence, or scope for His operation.

The series of blooming and fragrant plants which adorn and bless the earth, together with our fruiting plants, bushes and trees, are the Spirit of God unfolding Himself, in visions of loveliness, to our mortal eyes. God "so clothes the earth ;" and He always puts *Himself* into what He clothes. Consider these two things ;—the Force of His Love, and the Beauty of His Nature. Because of the Force of His Love, He must express, or manifest Himself ; and because of the Beauty of His character, His manifestation is an enchantment.

If Nature is not spiritual to you, it is because you are not spiritual. If you do not find the breath of Jesus in the balmy air, and in the odours of the garden, it is because His Breath is too little in you. If you find not God in the meadow and in the growing corn, it is because you go to the fields *without Him*. David used to find God in the fields. And Jesus found more of His Father, and found Himself nearer to His Father, in the fields, than in the temple.

III. And if you regard Nature with a tender awe, with a fond love, and with a thoughtful delight ; she will breathe through you the Divine Spirit, and open to you the secret door to her mysteries. Will you turn her into a corpse, and dissect her ? She will have her revenge on you. By false scents she will keep you at arm's length, and by illusory surface-appearances she will mislead you, so *that your profane soul may not come near to her vital centre and sanctuary.*

IV. Nature has an utterly Divine mode of speech : her words are woven into delicious unities of form, into living trees and bushes, whose fire glows forth in roses and peach-bloom. Again, she weaves her speech into singing larks and honey-bees ; and the crown of all her ineffable word-speaking is man and woman. If you lay sacrilegious hands on Nature's forms, destroying them and dissecting them, you will never hear her Divine speech ; broken bits of your own ignorance will be your only wisdom.

V. Supposing the modern itch of prurient curiosity, to have been in Adam, when his bride came forth to meet him, he would have said, " I must dissect her, to know how she is made, and what she is made of." And thus, he would have closed the door of knowledge for ever against himself. Could he ever have known her as his Divine Companion and the fulness

of his own soul? He would have acquired frightful knowledge, and lost his title to Divine knowledge. Nor will anatomists ever know Nature. Instead of a Bride, Death's head will stare them in the face.

VI. Regard Nature as your own soul laid out to view, with the Spirit of God breathing and palpitating in all her forms, and she will teach you something worth knowing. She will kiss you as chastely as the sun kisses the opening rose. Instead of being a corpse, she will be your soul's mate in lovelier form. She will be your living instructor, not speaking to you in the dead language of mortals; but in the Love-language of God, speaking to your heart; and in the Truth-language of God, speaking to your reason. For she draws Life instantly from God, and lives and grows thereby. Her bosom is warm with an influx from God's bosom. She is no hideous museum of stuffed lions, dead birds, and pinned insects: she flashes her soul-fire into the soul of the man who loves her, for the refreshment of his brain, and the joy of his heart. Like Jesus, whose Spirit is in her, she calls man, when tired of his own ways, and fevered in soul and blood, saying: "Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

Much as a Lily, trying to lift its head through the corruption which buries it; so springs Jesus in the centre of the soul, revealing Himself in the cool of

the day ;—that is, when the tumult of outer life a little subsides.

VII. If we divide matter and spirit, neither will be satisfactory. So long as prejudice exists on either side, we shall have no right human science, nor any right human pleasure. If matter find favour in our eyes, but spirit not ; we may have more or less of material science : on the other hand, if we are drawn exclusively to the spiritual, we may have more or less of spiritual science : but in neither case will our science be human. Man is not spirit alone, nor matter alone ; but both in unity. Material forms are bewitching, because the Infinite Spirit is in all matter ; and for the same reason the beginnings and the laws of matter are inscrutable.

VIII. If we allow *the Spirit that lives and operates in Nature* to touch our hearts, and inspire our thoughts, it will be most difficult for us, not to be “glad in the Lord ;” our meditation of Him will inevitably be sweet. No words will be joyous enough to express the truth of our affections.

If God were not strictly the soul of all goodness, the life of all beauty, and the fountain of true mirth, Heaven, which is the fulness and glory of His Presence, could not be a home of delights.

And if we have not such thoughts of God, in the midst of His works on earth, as to give us pure plea-

sure, what prospect can we have of finding a fulness of joy in the midst of His works in Heaven.

Every one must acknowledge that it is a perfectly delightful Being Who reveals Himself in our summer-sky, and in the response which the earth makes to the embracing glory. The return of morning ; the grassy slopes of the mountains ; the flowing river with its verdant bank on either side ; the sounding brooks ; the trees full of golden sap, in the act of outweaving their leafy blossoming dress ; the birds singing in their branches ; bread and oil and nectareous fruits coming out of the earth ; — are objects of contemplation fitted to stir an infinite affection in our hearts. Who can help exclaiming : “ I will be glad in the Lord ; my meditation of Him shall be sweet.” The grass and the vine, wild flowers, flaming poppies in the corn, orange grove and hawthorn bush, are full of soul, and an infinitely Beautiful Soul. And if I feel not His nearness, and hear not His voice speaking to me out of the living and fragrant loveliness, I must have lost my Divine childhood. The Jesus-Spirit must be dead in me.

IX. The green slopes of Horeb, Hermon and Carmel educated the prophets. David’s school was among the hills and valleys of Palestine. They inspired him, as mole-eyed science never inspires any man. They made him a divine poet for all

time. In the verdant bosom of the hills of Nazareth Jesus spent His childhood and grew up to manhood. He knew that birds and lilies, corn-fields and olive-trees expressed the thoughts of His Father. He was saddened and oppressed by men, and *very much* oppressed by religious men, but thrilled and soothed by Nature. He needed no other college for His twelve, nor any other church, than the banks of the Jordan, the mountain, the harvest-field, and the garden beyond the Kedron. He saw Nature momentarily evolving from God; and living, because His Life was in her.

X. The Father works, the child watches Him. The Father developes His thought, and as He gives to it outwardness and form, it enters the child's soul, and works there. God's works are man's studies; and they are endless studies, because there is in them an unutterableness, issuing from the Fount of all Love and Wisdom. "O God, how wonderful are Thy works: in Wisdom Thou hast made them all." "Thou renewest the face of the earth." "I meditate on the work of Thy hands." Dryness of brain and deadness of heart come not from Nature, but from the neglect of nature.

XI. Men who have no keen sensibilities, no poetic depth of soul, do not *muse* on God's works: they *see* them, as surfaces, that is all. Insight into

Nature, and genius, are synonymous. Nature is mute genius: genius is speaking Nature. The Genius of God flows forth and becomes Nature; which is therefore His Genius embodied, and living poetry.

The heavens are beautiful, the landscape is beautiful, summer is beautiful, flowers and fruits are beautiful; because in them the Creator's Nature comes into view.

But for every one who goes out to consider the heavens, or to consider the trees and the lilies "how they grow," ten thousand walk up and down the streets of Babylon, and go to the world's fair. One in a million will stand before a tree, admiring and admiring, musing and musing, until he sees and feels the sweet fire of God's Life pulsing through it, and every atom of the tree throbbing with Divine endeavour to clothe itself anew. The remaining 999,999 prefer to see a man-of-war. The ship is so much dead mechanism: the tree is in open communication with God, and alive with mystery and eternity.

XII. Nor do I see how you can fall into coarseness, or vulgarity of manners, or ever be slaves of mammon, if you have a heart for the Love, and an eye for the Loveliness of God, as they stand revealed in the imagery of Nature. Drawing-room parties and levees may make you artificial, and

weary you ; but the scenes of Nature will refresh you and make you natural, that is, "without guile." And every one feels that persons who are natural, or guileless, have a peculiar charm.—"Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Wonder not therefore that the "Teacher sent from God," leads you out into the fields, under the dome of the sky, saying, Behold the works of your Father, *consider* them, and you will be wise. No human tongue, no literature, will ever worthily represent the Wisdom, Love, and Glory which are in them. Stand still therefore, and consider, until you are filled with admiration and wonder ; and still consider, until you delight yourself in God.—Then offer Him the worship of your love.

XIII. It is Love that provokes meditation: there is no thinker like Love. The men who have intensely seen, felt, and enjoyed God, in Nature, are accepted, by common consent, as royal thinkers for all time. They never die. From generation to generation, we rehearse and chant their words in our assemblies and our homes.

XIV. Divinely adapted, as Nature is, to excite thought, she does not herself think. She has not the key to her own wonders of Wisdom : the children have the key. Sons and daughters of God, use your key ; and gate after gate will open to you, until you

see the Supreme Love filling Heaven and earth with the charms of *His Nature*. Quite a heavenly pleasure will crown and reward your meditative spirit. Muse, and muse, as only Love can muse, on Nature's beauties, until your soul pierces through them to God's Beauties. Your meditation will be sweeter than honey and the honeycomb ; and your delight will be a sign to you, that the warm Breath of God is weaving through your soul, and about your soul, your own divine beautifulness.

XV. Meditation is by no means an idle occupation ; but rather the most ardent work of the soul. "While I mused, the fire burned ; and aspiration, inspiration and revelation were my recompense. Meditation begets clear apprehension ; and clear apprehension, deep impression ; and deep impression, amendment, wisdom, joy, and high resolve.

XVI. Meditation finds the Jesus-Element everywhere. Meditation breathes it, and breathes in it : the soul blends and commingles with the Only-begotten of the Father, and is nourished with the sweetness and strength of His Eternal Life. By meditation the soul allures her affections through all the veils of Nature, to the bosom of Infinite Love which is at once in the centre of Nature, and in the depth of the soul. By loving meditation the soul draws the Rest and Delight of the Infinite Jesus-Spirit into her bosom.

XVII. And remember that the sweetness of meditation, and its depth of gladness, will fulfil the very highest service, both towards yourself, and towards all who know you. Your service will be greater than can be known, because it will be in constant operation, as an unseen influence. You will inbreathe and outbreathe the atmosphere of God ; the higher angels will be drawn to you, and within the privacy of your breast will whisper of Heavenly Secrets. "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart."

XVIII. One great reason why Nature so profoundly interests us, is, that the work of God in her, is the best illustration and parable of His work in man. The truest, as well as the most interesting of all sermons *on the new birth*, is the annual renewal of the earth. And whoever fails to see the law by which a warm sky makes the earth blossom, sing, and bear fruit, never will understand the regeneration of the soul. Christ kept close to the work of God in Nature, and never went into dry definitions. Man's work upon a tree begins after it is cut down ; but God's work ceases in dry timber, carve it as cunningly as you will. One throb of God's Life, will do more for your soul, than all the theology which the human brain has constructed since the world began. Cast away your idols, and muse on the work of God ; for the Beauty of His

work in Nature, mirrors the Beauty of His work in you. By Nature's beautifulness He makes His appeal, seeking to stir in you the longing to be made beautiful. When you are beholding the glory of the summer-earth, what can be more natural than the prayer: Let the Beauty of the Lord God develop itself in me!

XIX. Look upon your children's love of flowers and ripe fruit, as so much unknowing love to "the beauties of Holiness." You may easily call forth the desire for God's work in them, by calling their attention to the loveliness of His work in Nature. Show them the sun glowing towards the earth and the earth glowing towards the sun, and becoming thereby lovely and joyful. Then speak to them of Heaven as the Land of Love and Beauty, as the Home of the good; and tell them that God prepares us to live there by making us good and beautiful here.

XX. No one in his senses can believe that God renews men more grudgingly than the trees. If God so beautifies the vegetable world, if He so clothes the grass of the field, Christ argues, *How much more* will He beautify you! Through the co-operation of the warm sap in the tree, God renews the tree, and through the co-operation of warm desire in man, God renews man.

Beloved sons and daughters of God, you should understand how the case stands between you and Him. Your Heavenly Father is in one Mind, He is warm for your renewal, your glorification, your eternization : by fatal coldness on your part will you congeal His warm Breath into the frost of death? Coldness towards God's renewing work in you, is a stubborn No, a cold No, in the very centre of your soul. What hope can you have from that cold No? Can joy come to you from that No? Your coldness is the same as if you said in plain words, God shall not work in me, I will not be made for Heaven.

RIPE FRUIT.

“ The fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance ; against such there is no law.”

GAL. v. 22, 23.

OF necessity, the processes of nature, being processes of God, are parables of similar processes in the souls of men. “ The precious fruits brought forth by the sun,” and the good fruits of human affections and sympathies, are from “ the same Spirit.” All fruits, whether of trees, or men, are forms of God’s Goodness, and evolved by His Spirit. A very attractive view of Spirit !—the fruit-Producer ! the Ripener ! The face of the earth is renewed, the corn and the fruits are ripened for ingathering ; and men ripened for Heaven, by “ the same Spirit.”

II. In nature God talks with us, by pictures of Beauty, and in the music of Love. The good, the beautiful, and the musical are from One Spirit. Nature is the Bridegroom, indulging, and expressing, the fulness of His affections, in glowing imagery, in

forms that delight the senses and the soul. Nature is the outsung poem of God's Love, addressed equally to the eye, the ear, the smell, the taste, and the heart of His beloved. "His delights are with the sons of men."

What enchantments of loveliness, what warmth of colouring, what wealth of goodness, what exquisite odours, are comprehended in nature's annual circuit! Out of coldness, dimness, and barrenness, the new wonder comes forth, and puts on charm after charm, until she has crowned the earth with fruit. Then she rests. She has fulfilled her end once more. She has made her children glad, and filled and over-filled their stores with her bounty.

III. But ripe fruit, which is the immutable promise and purpose of God, is the end of a *patient* process. After a long and trying pause, young Spring, like a Hope of God, returns; but the end is not yet. It is the season of new breath, new motion, and new birth. Everything is astir, under the new, universal excitement. The earth, like a bride, puts on her beautiful attire. She blooms and sings. But bloom and song are not the end. They are but stages towards the end. By her beauty and music, she announces the exquisite end towards which she is moving. She will not pause, until she has produced her fruit, nor then, until her fruit is full-orbed and mellow. She reckons nothing less than *ripe*

fruit to be her fitting crown. Nothing less will satisfy God. "*Thou crownest the year with Thy Goodness.*" "First the blade," then the straw; but with what distinction He crowns His straw!—with crimson, succulent delights, as in the *strawberry*; and the straw of the world's bread-corn with golden ears! How great the distinction among the trees to be a fruit-tree! While the Vine, which cannot stand of itself, God crowns with double honour.

There is no envy among the trees. Each is beautiful and good. Each is satisfied to bear its own fruit. Apple, peach, pear, fig, orange, citron, pomegranate!—Each has its own distinction of form, colour, fragrance and flavour.—Each is a variety of God's goodness. Thou crownest the trees with *Thy goodness*.

IV. The varieties of the human race divine, are more numerous and distinct than those of fruiting shrubs and trees. The way of God with every son and daughter, is a progress towards ripe fruit;—the ripe fruit of "One and the same Spirit," through the peculiar nature and genius of the individual. The final fruit must correspond with the interior essence and quality of the tree. God evolves the hidden peculiarities of every tree, and the latent genius of every human spirit.

"From Me is thy fruit found." "*From Me;*" but it is "*thy* fruit." How wonderful, and as beautiful as wonderful, that God should evolve something

from *His own Nature*, through *our nature*; and therefore conditioned by our nature. As the fruits of the earth embody both the virtues of the sun and of the earth; so "the fruits of God's Spirit" in us, partake of His Nature and ours. Fruits of God, springing out of the ground of our souls! Who shall draw the line, and say where the action of God ends, and where the reaction of man begins?

V. Fruits make a very direct appeal to the senses appetites and affections of all persons, young and old. This is their special praise. "The *fruits* of Spirit" are beyond criticism and incapable of censure. We simply admire them. Objections may be raised against schemes of doctrine, and religious ceremonial; but no one fails to appreciate goodness, ripeness, and mellowness of character. You will hesitate to accept your neighbour's terms and definitions, you will wrangle with him over the interpretation of texts; but you will perfectly and sweetly agree in your admiration of "the fruits of the Spirit." They are like rose-gardens and vineries, like sun and moon and stars; they win the affections of all men. They constitute the universal religion in which all ages and all nations agree, in which Heaven and earth are at one. "Against such there is no law."

You may have an intellectual belief in what you and your Church conceive to be New Testament-Truth, with an entire absence of heavenliness of

character. But "the fruits of the Spirit," find them where you will, in Jew, or Turk, or Buddhist, are the signature of God. Not by their names, nor by their creeds, but "*by their fruits you shall know them.*" All persons in whom they are found, although not of your church, nor of any church, are undeniably children of God. For His Spirit dwelleth in them; and by His Spirit "they are sealed" for His Kingdom.

VI. Observe, therefore, that all ecclesiastical controversies and strifes belong to the outer court, "the worldly sanctuary," and do not touch the temple of true Religion. The Spirit of God is the "all and in all" of the one, universal, eternal Religion; of which "good fruits" are the evidence. "By their fruits you shall know them."

VII. I would that I could so write as to make all men, women, and children, love the Spirit, from which comes the all of human beauty and excellence, sweetness and joy. Sunshine is a delight. The Spirit is the more Vital Sun shining within the world of the soul. But however inoperative any words that I can use may be, there is surely an eloquence in the ripe "fruits of the Spirit," which cannot fail to command the praise of both doubters and believers. And if "the fruits" are delightful, faultless, heavenly, "the Spirit," which produces "the fruits," must be the all-desirable human good.

Has Jesus blessed you ? The Spirit of Jesus will bless you more. Jesus was Himself the Child of the Spirit. It will be to your advantage, He said, that I go away, and give place to the Spirit. When He comes, He will quicken and comfort you, as I cannot. I have taught you ; but He will new-create you. I have dwelt *with* you, but He shall dwell *in* you. Unknown, and unspeakable riches of energy and wisdom, love and gladness will the Spirit unfold within your souls and bosoms.

VIII. Not as an outward person seeks you, but as solar warmth seeks the blood, or as the ether of the atmosphere seeks the lungs, — so seeks the Divine Spirit to enter the human spirit. “The Father Himself loveth you.” “Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.” I love you, because the Father loved you, before I came to you. In outward form I go away, but I will come again, gliding into you, as the Spirit of your life.

IX. To begin with, “*the fruit of the Spirit is Love.*”

The Spirit shall come upon thee, therefore the Holy Thing which shall be formed within thee shall be the Son of His Love. The fruit of God’s Spirit is no self-seeking affection ; nor can it have a national, or sectarian bias. It scorns all measure and bound. It embraces churches and nations,

sinners and outcasts. The love-spirit is the germ, the soul of all the fruits. It runs through, and permeates them all. It is first and last ; it generates them all, and crowns them all. The essence, the radiance, the beauty and the delight of all heavenly virtues and graces are from Love. It is God with man. "God is Love."

How absurd it would be to suppose that Love could be from any other source, than a Person. Love is the perfect bond between two,—from a Person to a person. By a diffusion of the Love of God in the human spirit, God's Spirit and man's spirit become a wonderful one, a most intense one. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." The first of all the fruits, and "the greatest of all, is Love."

X. If the first fruit of the Spirit is Love, if the soul of all the fruits is Love, then "*Joy*" must be a most direct fruit of the Spirit. Very wisely, therefore, the apostle assigns to Joy a place immediately following Love. Indeed Love carries in its bosom a secret birth of Joy. The more Love, the more Joy. The more Love, the more unity with God, and hence, again, the more Joy.

When the heart is heavy and the countenance sad, they are from the man himself : he is Love-forsaken. For the time being, he is tasting his own darkness and bitterness, rather than the Spirit of God. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken

me?" If the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of Love, prevail in you, your night is ended, your morning of Joy is come.

We said above, that Love is a bond between two. Joy is the fruit of the union. Fruit is always a third, evolved from two in unity. We are here touching the central law of the universe. First, the Law between God and the creature; and next, the law between creature and creature. Observe, with adoration and admiration, that the supreme law of the universe is a Joy-giving law. It is Personal Love giving personal Joy. When man shall be perfect, and woman perfect, when the Life of God, which is perfect Love, shall be grounded and settled in each, and when both shall make one complete man, the Joy of each will be seven fold. This overflowing cup of Bliss is destined to become universal.

XI. "*Peace.*" Great peace, undying peace, "peace which passeth all understanding," often springs in the breast of fallen and dying man, as a fruit of God's Spirit in him. What a miracle of Love! Not more willingly does the Spirit dwell in Heaven itself, than in a penitent sinner's soul. If the story of Jesus' birth, life, and death, teaches any thing, it teaches this first of all, that the Spirit of God's Love is more desirous of finding a home with sinful men, than of staying in Heaven. If Heaven could

circumscribe, or shut in the Love of God, it would be limited love, not infinite Love, and therefore not the Love of God. The Love of God to the unthankful and the evil is more Godlike than all the Joy of Heaven. "Son, daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee," is a voice from the inmost, "the secret place" of His Love.

Holy Love opens a new point of purity in the soul; from this point evil passions are gradually allayed; restless and covetous desires are supplanted by Divine contentment; strife and envy cease, satisfaction ensues;—man is at peace. He rests in the all-sufficingness of God's Love, believes in the great purpose of His Love, and expects unmeasured good, an endlessness of good.

When, therefore, we are harsh, or irritable, or un-resting, it is always through a lack of the Spirit of God. If His Spirit dwell in us, we shall be lifted into the sunny, serene element of the Divine Joy and Peace.

XII. "*Long-suffering*"—longanimity. It is the very opposite of what we mean by being short, or snappish. It is the power of silence under injuries. It is "the Lamb of God." It is sublime self-conquest. Longanimity is a Perfection of God. It is the all-bearingness of His Love; and His Spirit generates the same tendency in man. How much God bears from us in silence, without resentment;

and we ought to be able to bear much from one another. If God's Spirit dwell in us, we shall prefer to bear a thousand wrongs and insults rather than resent one. One resented will empty the soul of Peace : a thousand silently endured will only deepen the Peace.

Moreover, the Divine Spirit dwelling in us, will cause us so sharply to feel, and so deeply to deplore, our own sins, that we shall have little inclination to dwell on the failings of others.

XIII. "*Gentleness.*"—A beautiful virtue, conspicuous in the whole family of Heaven. It combines hidden worth with outward quietude. It is marked by the absence of fussiness, haste, rudeness, loudness, talkativeness. It is innately royal and undemonstrative. Without self-assertion, it reigns in the sweetness of its own humility. It is majestic, and full of benignity. It is instinct with a most sensitive regard for the feelings of others. It is bland, courteous, and affable ; and if possible, conciliatory towards every one. It is Jesus clothing the person, from Jesus dwelling within the person. It is the indefinable atmosphere and aroma of His Presence, breathing through, and flowing about, the man, or the woman.

XIV. The sixth fruit of the Spirit is "*Goodness.*" Is it not most obvious, as we said, that Love rules

in all the fruits? Goodness expresses much more than good actions, or good works ; it refers to the prevailing disposition of the soul. "A good tree brings forth good fruit" spontaneously. It can do no other. "A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit." Christ's definition of "a good man" is one who has "a good treasure," or a treasury of good, "in his heart ;"—in other words, one who is "full of all goodness." Goodness thinketh no evil. Its delight is to do good, and to give pleasure.

And observe that the goodness which is a fruit of the Divine Spirit, is the goodness of holiness. You may find a corrupt, flabby species of goodness and immorality going together ; but the goodness which is of God, is always associated with purity, honour, truth, sincerity, rectitude.

XV. "*Faith.*" Faith here is both the eagle-eye of Love, and the childlike heart, which doubts not, but rests in God. The fruit of God's Love-Spirit is a fixed, reliant persuasion in the breast, that He will prove Himself our All-Perfect Father, in doing all that He has said, and more, exceedingly more, than can be said. Nothing can touch the confidence of the man whose faith is an insight and a sympathy, springing from the Divine Spirit, as from a well and fountain within himself. "Though He slay me, I will trust Him" none the less for life and for good. The more I suffer, the more good will I expect from

Him. Against hope I will believe in hope. Because God, my infinite Father, lives, there must be an eternity of friendship and enjoyment for me, His little child, from Him, and with Him.

XVI. "*Meekness*" is not only opposed to anger and conceit, but is the reverse of boldness and ostentation. It denotes the sweetness and humbleness of mind with which heavenly persons carry the clustered fruits of God's Spirit. The meek are unable to be haughty, or resentful; and are never coarse. If they cannot be peacemakers, they retire from the scene of strife. With the dignity and contentment which are their peculiar virtues, they freely stand on one side to allow others to get to the front. Only when they are essentially wanted, or when they can fulfil some special service for the benefit of others, will they consent to be prominent. Their rest is in hiding themselves. They greatly prefer seclusion, to the world which the self-love of men has made. But those who have a wealth of worth, which makes their loneliness joyous, "cannot be hid."

XVII. "*Temperance.*" This virtue, or "fruit of the Spirit," does not consist in the suppression of the appetites and passions; but in their wise government. Temperance is self-control and not abstinence. It is the golden measure, and the thankful enjoyment of all good things. Temperance abhors a

swinish sensuality ; but justifies, and even cultivates, the divine use of all the senses and their pleasures. Unless the angel, Moderation, preside at the feast, the other fruits vanish, and delight ceases. Temperance is the guardian angel of our health and happiness. It is a certain sweet harmony prevailing over all extremes and excesses.

XVIII. Now it is certain, that, wherever these fruits are found, there God dwells, and there Heaven lives. "*Against such persons there is no law.*" There is no law in the Divine Nature, there is no law in the universe, nor in eternity, that can possibly work against them. All things must inevitably work together for their good. Every door of Heaven stands open to them ; and all angelic races are ready to give them "an abundant entrance" to their kingdoms and homes. Their hope of glory admits not of doubt. Christ is formed in them, and they are the beloved of God. "The fruits of the Spirit" constitute the Harmony and Delight of social life in Heaven,—of the endless social life.

XIX. "Thou crownest the year with Thy Goodness." "*How much more,*" I hear Jesus say, will He crown you, O ye of little faith ! The fruits of His Spirit, flourishing and abounding in His children, are their eternal crown. The eternal Life which God gives is His Spirit ; and neither Solomon in all his

glory, nor the earth in all her fruits, is arrayed like one of His little ones in whom His Spirit dwells.

Ye Lilies of God's Heart and Garden, love Him according to the greatness of His Love, and as heirs and heiresses of God, reckon upon the completeness of your nature, the whole-orbedness of your character, the fulness of your Joy.

XX. It must be perceived that the essential and the everlasting in religious life are quite independent of the credibility or authenticity of any books, or narratives, whatever. Miracles, or no miracles, New Testament, or no New Testament, God's Nature and man's nature are the same. God's Nature is Love, Joy, Peace, Goodness, Truth, Gentleness, — one Eternal Harmony and Play of all excellent affections and virtues. Had these never been shown to us in Jesus Christ, they still were, and will for ever be, the facts and laws of Divine Nature. And the virtues and laws of Divine Nature must for ever be the spirit and rule of life for all men in Heaven and earth.

WINGS AND NESTS.

"The swallow hath found a Nest for herself, where she may lay her young." PSA. lxxxiv. 3.

THE complaint which the prophet made against idols, must also be made against the dry doctrines and traditions of the church, which human brains have forged into words. "There is no breath in them." But the least work of God embodies His affections and thoughts. Every insect, bud and leaf breathe; for the Spirit of Life breathes through them. They vibrate and quiver under the Presence of God, which is the secret of their development. They are strictly Sermons of God, in parables.

Moreover our humble sparrow, and that little spirit of our summer sky, the swallow, are here in a sanctuary-psalm.

II. Jesus used to say: Your Heavenly Father's Life opens in the lilies, therefore deeply "*consider*" them. Your Heavenly Father's Love is in little birds, and His Providence over little birds. He made the sparrow His text more than once. He

said, It will make you happier, if you believe that the sparrow is an embodied thought of God, that God is really with the sparrow, caring for its wants and pleasures.

“O ye of little faith, you are of more value than many sparrows.” You have immense wants, you are planned for endlessness of development. You are not the Great Father’s creatures, but His children, and it will be His pleasure to supply all your need out of His own riches. Has He not arranged the universe, and all things in life and death, on your behalf, and for your use and pleasure, that you may come to your “fulness of joy”? But remember that the fulness of eternity’s joy, requires a corresponding fulness and completeness in your nature. And lo, He has gathered all things together into Christ’s Humanity for you, that you may derive your completeness from Him.

III. Birds are symbols of delightful powers, being specially buoyant, electric creatures. Their quills, feathers, bones, as well as their chest and lungs, are open to the ether, that they may lift their bodies into the sky, and roam at liberty “in the midst of heaven.” They owe their powers of flight and powers of song to their openness to pulsations from heaven, and to the magnetism of the atmosphere. Ye larks, linnets, nightingales, you are marvellously susceptible of inspiration. Some of us also vastly like the musical

utterance with which you clothe your inspiration. We know your songs are from Love, and in love. Your vocal harmonies in the mating season, suggest to us Eternity's dual blessedness. If we were as open to the Breath of God as you are, our souls too would be musical fountains *of Love*.

Through their highly sensitive nervous system, the migratory birds are able to scent spring and winter long before they come. They do not remain with us a day too long. They gather together, and say to their children, "Severity is coming, let us away;" and before the severity comes they are sailing in balmier, sunnier latitudes. And when you see them back again, you may be sure that winter is past and gone. They come with the flowers of the new year, and withdraw before the leaves fall. Where it is not bright and genial they will not live. They are a divine rebuke of all rigour. Even in summer, if the day be rude and gloomy, they prefer to remain in their nests and hiding-places.

IV. The winged power of birds represents *a universal law of nature*. There is an effort in every thing to get into liberty:—which indeed is the evidence that the Breath of God is the centre and soul of every thing. Even the trees, which are rooted so tenaciously in the earth, show a winged tendency. They throb, and throb, until they open themselves into light and liberty. They wing themselves with

leafy garments that they may inbreathe the sunbeams and flutter in the air. Look at the orchids how they put out their wings, eastward, westward, northward, southward, in their longing for the liberty of the sky. There is neither root, nor seed, that is willingly imprisoned in its earthy body.

O ye souls of men, and specially, ye souls of women, are you willingly imprisoned in your material bodies? Forms of earthly existence, very inferior to you, are in the effort to get into liberty. There is a pulse in every creature, in every plant, throbbing towards a life beyond itself. Buried seeds must open and shoot upward, though they die in the struggle. The electric force within them, expands, bursts its limits, and makes for itself a freer, lighter body. It must leave its house of bondage, and evolve a new body which shall breathe and wave in the sunlight.

It is the story of the whole creation. The Glory of God imprisons itself in matter, that it may lift and etherealize matter. God delights to become flesh that He may glorify it. He is the glowing, heaving, law-giving Force in every organism. "All Thy works praise Thee."

V. What an uplift the mineral world finds in the vegetable world! The heavy, lethargic mineral mounts toward heaven in the growing corn and in the grass: unless the mineral principle were in it, the meek grass would be too meek to lift itself out

of the earth. In every tree and leaf of the forest, in every loveliness of the garden, there is a basis of flint and metal. The mineral, in the plant, becomes spirited; and the plant, through the mineral, puts on strength. One Glory lifts all matter and makes it aerial. Matter takes wing, branching skyward from the trees, and mounting and singing skyward in the lark.

The time comes that the Glory which involves itself in vegetable and animal substance, enters into a sharp contention with the material element, and liberates itself. But all matter thus becomes more and more refined and wonderful. The regeneration of man is not exceptional. Under one great law, the physical regeneration of the globe, and of all things in it, are making as much progress as the human race; they are indeed moving on simultaneously with the regeneration of the race.

VI. As Job sat musing by his fire-side, watching the flame and the sparks flying upwards, he exclaimed, "That is a Divine and human law. Man is born to go through the same sharp process. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." His trouble is his loosening from his earthly bondage. The glory hidden in him seeks to be liberated, sparks of the latent Divine fire move Godward. Affliction stirs his nobler spirit, bids him put forth his wings, and quit the house of his captivity.

Trouble has its prayers ; and is really a subliming process. Trouble is man opening to new inspiration ; forthwith he utters himself in holy desire and in musical song. The sacred fire wrestles with its earthly bonds, and escapes to its Source. What is faith but the soul exercising herself in flights toward the unseen and the eternal ? Faith soars and soars, until it enters into "the secret place of the Most High," seeking an abiding home in our Almighty Father's House and Presence.

Even by his natural breathing-power, man makes declaration every moment that his life comes from beyond himself, and tends beyond himself. Breathing, he frees himself from himself. By interior breathing he lifts his life into God. As eagles lift themselves above the storm-clouds, man lifts himself out of his sorrows, beyond his sorrows, into the Glory of the Eternal Spirit-Sun.

VII. The effort to come forth from under earthly restrictions and oppressions, is really universal.

By evaporation, the dense, oceanic waters mount up and float in the sky. In turn, every drop of the sea acquires a newness of existence and elemental freedom. The fountains of dark waters hidden in the heart of the earth, urge themselves on and on through tortuous rocky paths of darkness, that they may see the day, float upward as vapour, become mirrors in the dew, be organized in verdure, and sport in the sunbeams.

The centre of the earth itself is ceaselessly heaving to reach the light: it boils and hisses to find liberty: it fumes, smokes, and rages in fire, that it may be free. Volcanoes are simply huge breathing places for the occult forces, which unwillingly are made subject to bondage.

Ferment, anxiety, distress, in one form or another, prevail in all earth's creatures and substances. The heavens are ever in motion towards the earth: the earth is in labour to reach the heavens. Descending and ascending series make one circuit. It is the pulse and motion of God in His Creation: universal pulsation is from, and, therefore, towards, One Centre.

Let me come forth into the great expanse, let me breathe more freely, move more nimbly, is the prayer both of dumb nature, and of the soul of man. The human soul is but the apex of the universe. In him the centripetal law becomes consciousness, and yields to the Great Attraction. By bewailing her darkness and bondage, by agonizingly labouring after light and freedom, the soul proclaims her Origin. Outwardly by pressing steam and electricity into his service; inwardly by faith and hope, man signifies his delight in winged power, and in lightning-powers of transit and communication. What are the agonies, prayers, and tears of Jesus, but His intense longing and effort to reach the hour of His ascension? Life in Christ is winged life; and the ascension of the inner man anticipated.

VIII. But if wings are so suggestive, *Nests* are even more suggestive.

Obviously, it is impossible to think of *Nests* without thinking of Love, of Mothers, of little ones, and of songs over the little ones. *Nests* are built in the joy-time of life, and in the joy-time of the year. *Nests* are *Homes*, and *Homes* are directly from the heart of God : and therefore, are full of heart. Wherever a happy home is, you are permitted to say, " This is none other than a house of God, this is the gate of Heaven." Hearts and Homes are the centre of the Universe, and the crown of its bliss.

IX. *Nests* may be very humble,—they are very humble. God is very humble,—as humble as Motherly Love can make Him. " The swallow hath made a nest for herself where she may lay her young ; " for the Divine Motherliness runs through her, and is both the warmth of her impulse, and the art of her skill.

Nests are built of the odds and ends of everything, of broken sticks and straws, of dead leaves and feathers, and even of mud ; but they are rounded into homes, and made as comfortable as feet and bills can make them. It is wonderful what feet and bills can do, when Love moves and guides them.

X. The Universe is from Love, in Love, unto Love.

Love is the soul of all, and the soul of all is in all. "All in all," is His Name. It is infinite Love's Name, which is the same as God's Name.

A Nest,—with the vast and tender firmament above it, with the earth, a blooming Paradise, around it, with a mother in it, and the father-bird not far off singing out the music of his soul over the nest,—is an image in small of the whole creation. The all of Heaven and earth is the Nest of God: His little ones are in it, they are all under His wings, His breast quickens them all into life, and His Love rejoices over them with singing. Bird-song is bird-love liberated on the air; and bird-love is God's love in the bird, as angel's love is God's love in the angel.

XI. The Nest itself, (if you cut it off from its associations with the great sky, the flowering earth, and the song of love,) is a mere cell. And how passing strange that this prison should attract the bird more powerfully than the whole sun-lit heaven and earth. God made the bird for freedom, to roam at large in "the midst of heaven." What spell is she under? What is the force which binds her to the captivity of the nest? It is mother's love. Love is mightier than the sky, more potent than the sun. The nest to the bird, is what this earth, full of imprisoned souls, is to infinite God.

The Jesus-Spirit is in every nest. The motherly-

love which makes the nest an irresistible attraction is the Divine Spirit in Jesus. He used to say : The mother-bird's devotion to her helpless young is My devotion to you. I long to brood over you, to quicken you with My Life, to make you ready for your migration to "Paradise with Me."

XII. Think of your imprisonment on earth, and in the earthly body, under the parable of the child-bird in the close prison of its nest, and in the closer prison of the egg. As the motherly bosom presses against her eggs, so Christ presses Himself against our souls, pulsing His sweet bosom-fire into our hearts, that He may kindle immortality in us.

As soon as we are quickened, the new life in us (much as new life in the egg), will press towards the side of the shell which is nearest to His breast. The little heart in the egg, beating, beating in the darkness of its prison, is as desirous to receive the warm life, as the parent bird is to give it. Learn the secret of true prayer. It is the love of man responding to the love of God ; and the love of the Father answering the prayer of the child.

There is a shell between the little one, and the love that broods over it ; but the shell is very thin and brittle, and on the right day, and in the right hour, it will be easily broken through. The little one within is praying for liberty, tapping, tapping, with its beak against its shell. It little knows how

easily, and how soon, the thin partition between its prison and the heaven of the sky, will be broken through.

The mother-bird hears the tapping, it goes through her soul, she knows that the moment of her liberty, and the liberty of her nestling, is near. She will soon see the reward of her love, travail and patience. There are eyes in the shell longing for light, there is a heart beating towards deliverance, there are wings forming, which by and by will carry the new-born creature through the expanse of heaven.

XIII. Now all this talk about birds, wings, nests, new-birth, and the liberty of the sky, is really our Heavenly Father's Jesus-gospel, in symbol. In the earthly form of their existence the children of God are in their shells, the Spirit, like a Dove, is overshadowing them, and great Heaven, full of companions, is waiting to receive them.

From homes to homes we go,—from homes in shells and earthly nests, to Homes of greater freedom in the Light of God. Little birds, at first, dread to look over the edge of their nest. It seems to them that beyond the nest there is nothing to receive them, nothing but the great nothingness; and yet the bird's nature is planned and destined to go forth into that untried, dreaded, vacant vastness. And, lo, when the time comes, what was a great

dread, turns into a great joy, and the creature finds its new mode of existence to be most delightful ; instead of a vast nothingness, it proves to be a bird-heaven, swarming with companions.

In faith and hope, in prayer and song, we have even now delightful powers of excursion, from the nest and back again, from the nest and back again, carrying us in thought and desire where we are not, until the day comes when we shall exchange our humble nest, for freedom and completeness in our greater Home, and our very own society.

Heirs and heiresses of God, look well to your winged powers, and count them your distinction, your hope, your glory. Reckon upon your escape from the earthly shell and nest, as the day of your illustrious enlargement.

XIV. "O Jehovah of Hosts, my King and my God." "My flesh crieth for the Living God." And what wonder, since "Living God" is in my flesh ! "Living God" weareth my flesh ! Therefore my flesh crieth to be "living,"—crieth, from an intensity of life, against death. The sparrow hath *found*—; man *crieth*—-. The Infinite maketh *him* cry for the infinite, the Eternal maketh *him* cry for the eternal. "O Lord of Hosts, *my* King and *my* God." Other creatures find the answer to their nature on earth : man not. The cry in man is deeper than death, it pierces eternity, heaven after heaven repeats the

echo ; and God answers, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love ;" and let thy cry witness to thee, with what secret forces I am drawing thee to Myself, and into what depths of thy being I am giving Myself to thee.

XV. "Man know thyself!" and be allured into the immensity of thy Hope. Thy breast is a shell over a wonderful life, — too wonderful for hasty development. Thou criest, "My King, and my God:" He answers: "I am Thine"—"I have begotten thee:" thou art too great, too manifold, too involved, to be soon unfolded: My wonders will be opening in thee and to thee for ever. Thou art a descent from My Infinite Love ; and lo, I am with thee all thy pilgrim-days, and will surely bring thee into My Eternity, which is thy Home, and the scope of thy powers.

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